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"This is my perfection."

P. 2.

Dorothy's Story;

OR,

Great St. Benedict's.

BY

L. T. MEADE,

AUTHOR OF "SCAMP AND I;" "A KNIGHT OF TO-DAY;
ETC.

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DOROTHY'S STORY.

CHAPTER I.

BEHIND THE SUMMER-HOUSE.

“ Touch and hold !
And if you weep still, weep where John was laid
While Jesus loved him.”

MRS. BROWNING.

DTHOUGHT I had found perfection !
The month was July, the day sultry. I had
been up the dusty Dulwich road, had visited
some *protégés* of my father's, in the old College of
God's Gift, had been petted by every one of the
twelve poor sisters in the Almshouses, had read part
of Julius Cæsar to a poor brother who was quite
blind, and now having got home again, and as I

conceived, done my duty well, I found myself in a nook behind the summer-house. A secret, sacred nook, discovered by and known only to me.

This was my perfection. Let me describe it. My seat was a bank of thick, soft moss; a cool stream of clear water ran at my feet; over and around me, foliage of the deepest, shadiest green shut out all but a twilight reflection of the glaring summer day.

"Jean Ingelow," bound in violet and gold, lay on my knee, a leaf of fresh-gathered crimson strawberries peeped at me through the grass. I murmured a line of

"Brothers and a sermon."

I put a great ripe berry between my thirsty lips.

The place *was* perfection, and in perfection I went to sleep.

.

"I am sorry you think so badly of her," were the words, in my mother's voice, which awoke me.

"She is not like your other children," replied my aunt. "She is unmanageable. The fact is, Alice—for you know I always say, whether pleasant to hear or not, just what I think—I consider

Dorothy the most disagreeable child in the world."

"Poor Dorothy!" sighed my mother.

An impatient movement was distinctly audible on my aunt's part.

"Alice," she exclaimed, "you are weak—you always were lamentably weak."

My mother, whether weak or not, was of a very humble nature, and ventured no protest against this strong-minded assertion.

"And," continued my aunt, "you show your weakness palpably in the management of that child. She requires firm management, severe management, no indulgence. She is bad-tempered, sulky, and, I truly believe, heartless."

"Oh! not heartless," interposed my mother.

"What other name do you call it? This morning you, wearied after your bad night, asked her to take care of little Tom, and she refused in her peculiarly ungracious manner."

"She had her Greek to prepare."

"Her Greek! I don't believe she is a morsel clever. I'd soon teach her which should come first, her mother or her Greek. I wish I had her under my thumb for a little; I venture to say

I'd break her into submission. But no, I could not undertake it, I am sure such a child would worry me to death. I'd do anything to relieve you, Alice. I'd take Ruth, or Lucy, or little Harold, but not Dorothy; there is nothing for Dorothy, no hope whatever but school. You must send her to school."

"She attends Miss Ryder's classes."

"That is nothing to the purpose, she requires the daily and hourly discipline of a boarding school."

"We cannot afford it, Hannah."

"In that case, she will be ruined, and what is far more important, she will ruin the others. Such an example must be contagious."

"I do not see what harm she does the children, they are all very good," answered my gentle mother.

"Yes, but how long will they remain so? how long will Mabel and Lucy obey you when they see that Dorothy does not? No, Alice, this is a very serious matter, it requires strong measures, and immediate measures. Unless you wish to see your whole family injured, you must separate that girl from her brothers and sisters. Any sacrifice

should be made to get her to school at once. I am far from rich, but so assured am I of the necessity of this step, that I am quite willing to assist you with a little money for the purpose."

"I don't think Dorothy would like school," answered my mother, bringing out her words in an uncertain and puzzled tone.

My aunt nearly jumped from her seat.

"*Like it!* Alice, I have need of patience when listening to you. Are her likes and dislikes alone to be considered? Yes, though she is my niece and your daughter, I must plainly say that I never met so unpleasant a child. I don't think she has one redeeming trait; she is ugly, she is more than unmanageable, and, notwithstanding her prodigious learning in Latin and Greek, I believe her to be very stupid."

At this juncture the two ladies were startled by perhaps the last apparition they wished to see at that moment, namely, Dorothy herself. With quivering lips and startled eyes, I had darted out of my hiding place and stood before them.

"Aunt Hannah," I said, coming up to her, "I wish to tell you that I have heard every word of your conversation about me. I was asleep behind

the summer-house and your voice awoke me, and I heard every word. I wish also to say that I am not a bit sorry I listened ; on the contrary, I am glad. I know now what you really think of me, and to it all I have only one reply to make, it is this : Unless my father commands me to do so, I will *not* go to school."

Before my astonished aunt could make any reply, I had marched away, my head in the air, my step firm and unfaltering. I did not return to my late elysium, but walked slowly up to the house. My face was burning, my ears tingling, and my soul stung to the quick. And yet much of what I had heard, I had listened to calmly. Some I even acknowledged to be true. Strange and wild I was, reckless and unmanageable, fearless of blame, indifferent to praise. In this household I was the scape-goat, in this flock of lambs the black one ; but when my aunt went on to declare that I was heartless, unlovable, a creature without one redeeming trait, there, *having* a heart, she stung me, stung me beyond endurance. I reached the house. The drawing-room windows were open ; I entered by them. All the windows and doors were open, the place was fresh with the

soft summer breeze. But I knew one door would be shut, and going to it, I knocked importunately.

"Who is there?"

"Father, 'tis I; may I come in?"

"Wait one moment."

I heard the shuffling of some papers, then the door was slowly opened, but not wide enough to admit me.

"I am particularly busy, my darling, must you —?" Then catching sight of my face he stopped. "My child, what is the matter?"

"Father, can I speak to you?"

"Certainly, my dear child; come in."

He drew me into the room, shutting the door behind us.

"What is it, my poor child?"

"O father!" I sobbed, "O father! you have spoken to me kindly and I can cry now." And then I did cry, such tears as surely in their great pain and fierce consuming power few children have shed. My father stood silently by, and when at last I attempted to speak, he checked me.

"Not now, Dorothy, not yet. Come here and

sit by my side. I want to finish this chapter ; it is the last chapter of my book, Dolly ; when it is finished, you shall tell me about this trouble."

He drew a low stool to his feet, and making me seat myself on it, bent again over a pile of MSS. which lay on a small table by his side. I knew the appearance of those MSS. well ; daily I had seen them growing into bulk and importance beneath his fingers. I knew something of the treasures of learning they contained, portions of them had been read aloud to me, the bare look of them soothed me now. I turned to watch my father as his fingers travelled rapidly over the page ; they were thin fingers, long and almost transparent. My eyes sought his face. Even to my inexperienced gaze it looked jaded and sunken, furrowed with many cares ; so pale, that but for the glimpse I caught of the keen, deeply-set dark eyes, as they bent over his work, I could hardly have supposed it to be a living face ; the hair which rested on his temples was grey.

Dear father ! loving father ! brave, just, true heart ; you and I, and this MS., not all the Aunt Hannahs in the world can part us three.

So I whispered to myself, and leaned my head fondly against his knee.

"Well, Dorothy," he said at length, "tell me this trouble."

"Is the book finished, father?"

"Not quite, my child, but it will be to-morrow. It has taken ten years of my life, Dorothy, and now one day's work will, I hope, complete it."

"Father, it will be a wonderful book."

"It may leave its mark," answered my father, glancing at it fondly. "Yes, I trust it will leave its mark. But now about yourself, tell me this trouble."

My father's hand was on my head, my father, from whom they wished to part me. I struggled for a moment with my emotion, and then out it all came, all the passion, the pain, the keen sense of injustice and wrong.

"She says I am ruining them, father, that I am stupid, and ugly, and bad, and heartless" (this last with a great gasp), "and I must go to school, I must go away from you, or I shall ruin them all."

"Who says this of you, Dorothy?"

"Aunt Hannah, and she has put mother against

me, and mother *almost* promised I should go. I suppose it is true, and I am hopeless; but don't send me from you, father. You don't mind my doing my Greek with you, do you, father? If you send me from you, I shall, no, I shan't die, that would be too happy, but I shall live with a broken heart."

"I should miss you, Dorothy," answered my father; "I don't want you to go."

Miss me! thank God! In one instant my arms were round his neck and my head on his shoulder.

"O father! I do love you," I whispered in an ecstasy.

My father pressed his lips to my hot forehead.

"Poor child! poor little warm heart; and yet, what if I *must* part from thee?"

"How?" I asked, starting back in alarm. "Am I so bad, father, must I go?"

"No, my child, there shall be no separation between you and me in that way, but we will not talk of this yet. Dorothy, sit down again; if your father finds himself obliged to inflict a little pain upon you, will you bear it bravely?"

"I will bear anything from you, father."

"That is right, we have always understood each other. Now, tell me why your aunt called you heartless, for that I hold to be the worst accusation; had you done anything to make her say so?"

"I would not take care of Tom for mother when she felt so tired this morning."

"Why not, Dorothy?"

"I wished to read my Greek over, father, and Mabel was doing nothing. I thought she might take him."

"Did you ask her to take him?"

"No, I was proud and got angry. I know I'm very bad."

"That was certainly bad," replied my father, and he sighed.

I sat still, feeling hopelessly and oppressively wicked.

"You have often been told about your faults?" remarked my father at length.

"Yes, I know about them," I said.

"You don't know how to get rid of them?"

"No," I said. "I don't believe I ever could do that."

"There I differ from you, but we will return to that presently; I should like first to speak to you of your virtues."

I started and looked incredulously in my father's face. My virtues! had I any?

"Do you really believe, Dorothy, that there is no redeeming trait in your character?"

"Sometimes I think I am all bad!"

"You are so bad you cannot make yourself a whit better; you are in sore need of a Physician, no quack, mind you, but a good one. And yet, Dorothy, I, who know you well, see in your possession three virtues, three bright gems given to you to use or to abuse. Shall I tell you what they are?"

"Yes, please, father!"

"I believe you to be, very truthful, very brave, and very loving."

My father spoke too emphatically for me to doubt him. I laid my head on his knee and kissed his hand.

"Of all my children, Dorothy, with the exception of Arthur, I believe that you can become the noblest and the best. I see in you the capability of rising to higher heights, but, alas! also of sink-

ing to lower depths than any of the others. Do you understand me?"

"I think you understand me," I said.

"Yes, I believe I do. Now, Dorothy, shall the bright gems be abused?"

"Father, I don't know how that can be. Are they not the best things?"

"Undoubtedly; and yet, the love may become idolatry; the bravery, fool-hardiness; the truth, it is difficult to speak against that, but misdirected, it may cruelly wound a brother's heart."

I sighed heavily.

"Then they are useless," I said.

"I think, Dorothy, you must take them to the Physician."

I looked up without replying.

"You must take them to Christ," continued my father, in a low, tender tone.

"I cannot do that," I said.

"Why?" asked my father.

"It is impossible," I said. "If I take them to Christ, I must be a Christian."

"You must be a follower of Christ certainly."

"I cannot be that."

My father was silent for a moment.

"What will you do?" he asked at last.

"Is there no other way, father?"

"People say so, Dorothy. Many ways have been tried. Many men have tried to get in by some other path into the sheepfold, but none ever succeeded who did not find the door: the door is Christ. Many men have struggled hard to get rid of their sins, they have fancied their virtues could save them. God says, 'Your righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' Only One can wash our crimson stains, only One can give the robe of perfect righteousness, that One is Christ. Many have thought the world better than Christ, and have died without finding Him; but none ever went to heaven, none ever 'conquered in the fight' without Christ."

"Then there *is* no other way?" I said.

"No other way, none other name whereby you may be saved."

"Is Aunt Hannah saved? Is she a Christian?" I asked.

"Her salvation will not help your soul, Dorothy."

"But she calls herself a Christian."

"Do not call yourself one, *be* the thing."

'Be what?' I asked.

"Christ's, in Christ, part of Christ, His own possession. Live close to Him, with His arm around you, His smile shining upon you, His love in your heart. True, some have got to heaven who have walked afar off, but I would have you come nigh."

I was silent.

"Dorothy," continued my father, "I have prayed for this, as I never prayed in all my life for anything else. Can you guess the reason?"

I was still silent, creeping more closely to his side.

"Look at me, Dorothy, and see if you can guess."

I did look and saw more plainly than ever the thin worn face, the strange light in the sunken eyes. The look was a revelation; my father saw it, and put his arm round me.

"My child, my darling, we must part."

I knew it even before he had spoken. The truth had flashed upon me. The light in a great flood of awful whiteness had filled my soul. My pulses grew numb. I opened my lips, essaying to speak, but was unable.

"This hand is growing thinner, Dorothy, and

this heart beats more feebly day by day. The book is nearly finished," pointing to the MS. by his side, "and so is the life."

I was standing with his arm around me; now I gently removed it and sat down still and sober. My passion, my pain, my grief, of half an hour before, where were they? Vanished! What *had* seemed so cruel and bitter was nothing after all, for *now* there was a shadow in the air, something dark was surrounding me; I felt it, but shut up my understanding. I would not know this evil thing; was it despair? I would have none of it.

"*Therefore*, Dorothy, I have prayed for this. I want you to rely on the Divine Father, when the earthly father with his sins and frailties is removed from you. I want you to know the love of Christ."

"I know nothing of Christ," I whispered desperately.

"But you will come to Him. Come, and He will teach you of Himself."

"How?" I asked.

"This way, Dorothy," and my father held out both his arms. I crept into them and laid my head on his shoulder.

"So will Christ receive thee, dear heart, and lay the poor little straying lamb on His shoulder. Don't doubt the Good Shepherd, Dorothy : 'Like as a father pitieith,' so doth He."

I was silent.

"You can come this way, Dorothy?"

"I think so," I murmured.

My father laid his hand on my head.

"Lord Jesus," he said aloud, "you hear her. Lord, I leave it to Thee to fulfil this desire, to perfect this good intention. These arms must cease to hold her, but Thine can encircle her always.

"Father in heaven, be a Father to this child, defend her with Thy heavenly grace, that she may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more until she comes to Thy everlasting kingdom."





CHAPTER II.

THE OLD HOME.

“Gardens haunted by the nightingale.”

CAMPBELL.

 WENT up to my own room, and took down from its place on the book-shelf Bunyan's “Pilgrim's Progress.” I had always loved the story, but now I looked deeper, and saw myself reflected in the tale. This man, so poor, so timidous, so heavily laden, who

“Wrestled on toward heaven,
'Gainst storm, and wind, and tide,”

was like me.

He had a pilgrimage to go on; so had I. He wished to end his days in the celestial city; so did I.

In these two particulars we resembled each other, but I felt, as I thought and pondered, that the likeness ended here; for Christian, when he fled from the City of Destruction, was animated

by an overpowering desire to get rid of a burden which pressed him to the earth. Was this my reason for going on pilgrimage? Alas! my burden, did I possess it, was no weight to me. I went, I went alone, because thus only could I meet my father again. For his sake I would pass through the wicket gate, and encounter the perils of the road. To be folded once more in his arms, I would do this thing, I would live this life, however miserable it made me.

I was miserable then; how far off was my perfection of an hour before! I was very miserable then.

A blow had fallen which, while it partly stunned and so subdued my agony, roused me also to action. I was to part from my father; so he said, and I believed him. But all the energy of my nature was awakened to defend myself against this desolation: he was going from me, but I should find him again; I should look for him, not only for my short period of time, but for my endless ages of eternity. Ever, until we met on however distant and far-off a shore, my soul should follow his soul; and if in this search Christ could aid me, I would take His aid.

Thus, and for this reason, I would be what they called a Christian. I did not love Christ, I was quite sure I had no love for Him whatever; but I wanted Him, wanted the assistance He only could render: and had I but known it, was not this want synonymous to, or at least the first step in, love?

I made my resolve, then rose and put down the date in my diary, for I was child and girl in one, and therefore kept a diary.

The date was July 18, in a certain year between 1860 and 1870, not so very long ago. I look back on it now, and see that from this date my story really begins.

We lived in a small, old-fashioned place just outside the hamlet of Dulwich. Here I was born, and here also my seven brothers and sisters first saw the light. We grew up unsophisticated and childlike, on the borders of the great world, and yet not of it, well pleased with our seclusion and our home. It was a small place. Undoubtedly no man with much money would have chosen to live there, but it boasted of a lovely view of true English woods and lanes, and had besides a glorious old garden, rich with fruit and flowers.

The house was ugly externally, and internally lacked all modern improvements; but what we had never known, we did not miss; and whatever we disagreed on, father, mother, and children were unanimous in considering Woodside the happiest home in the world. We had some well-established reasons for this regard. The place belonged to our father. It was not an old family abode, but we had no vulgar yearly rent to pay. Our grandfather had purchased the house and grounds, and Woodside was our home by all the sweet rights of possession. Then, what a garden it contained! Surely like no other for happiness, for flowers, for fruit! What colour was there! what variety! what profusion!

There might be seen sweet-pea, sweet-william, marygold, of every species. Moss and cabbage-roses smiled at you; heliotropes and geraniums, pinks and carnations, made the air fragrant with their perfume. How easily they all grew, how little attention or trouble they demanded, how freely they blossomed, how lovely they looked! The flowers were all old-fashioned, and I had a fancy then, which has rather grown with me in later times, that some of them had never shown

their faces anywhere else out of Eden; and I remember well, looking down into the heart of a tiny, blue flower, the name of which I never could discover, and wondering how it felt when Eve went away, and Adam could water and dig about its roots no longer. But, if possible, the fruit in this garden surpassed the flowers. The apples on those gnarled, old, moss-grown trees were rosy, juicy, large; the strawberries crimson in colour, prodigious in quantity, in quality superb. The gooseberries were amber and delicious; the currants, when made into jams and jellies, cured all the sore throats in the country; never were seen such pears, such cherries, such peaches, such plums. The garden walls were sadly out of repair, weeds often sprang up among the flowers, many fine fruit-trees grew woody and needed pruning; but notwithstanding these defects, which in truth we neither saw nor noticed, there it stood, in its sweet confusion and rich abundance, the most beautiful spot in the world to us all. How the birds sang in those trees! how the bees hummed among those flowers! how the butterflies and dragon-flies vied with the roses and pinks in brilliancy of colour!

But the old ivy-grown house had also its merits—

how romantic, how *ghostly*, were its low oak-lined rooms, its winding staircase, its spacious entrance hall! Its cupboards alone were the delight of my mother and Aunt Hannah, and these abounded in every sitting-room and on every landing. Peeps we children had of them now and then, revealing to our view preserved fruits, Sunday garments, holiday toys, forbidden delights.

Once, biding my time, I secreted myself in the jam-press. How delicious was that stolen fruit! now well worth the after punishment!

Mabel and Lucy were horrified, Mother sorry, Father grieved, but Aunt Hannah's shocked face was worth it all; for the truth will out; from my earliest days, I showed the inherent depravity of my nature in my longing on all occasions and in every imaginable manner to shock Aunt Hannah. And here I may as well confess that I was not at all a good girl; I was always wild, always restless, always impatient of control. So rude, so unpolished, so uncouth was I, that the most partial parent could scarcely have been proud of me. In every particular I was a contrast to my brothers and sisters; they were handsome, orderly, well-behaved children, beautiful in their Sunday best,

picturesque in their Monday garments. Still we lived together, the black lamb with the white, in tolerable love and amity, in unfettered freedom and childlike happiness, until about two years before my story begins Aunt Hannah made our house her home. I was nearly fifteen then, a creature, in body all legs and arms, and, I doubt not, in mind equally grotesque. A lamb so black could hardly fail to attract her Argus eyes. I was marked out for special discipline, held up for special warning; outwardly I defied, inwardly I mourned. My sky clouded over, my childish happiness departed.

The rooms in the old house were so small and so numerous, that notwithstanding the eight children who lived there, I, Dorothy, had a tiny oak-lined closet to myself. This closet and my father's influence were, during these last two years, the beacon stars of my existence; all things else bore me downwards—my own nature, my reckless, disloyal spirit, my mother's despair, my aunt's hard words, my brothers' and sisters' scarcely concealed aversion.

But my little room and my father's smile were lights pointing upward, often, indeed, burning

dimly, but never quite going out. When they thought me utterly without feeling below, how many bitter tears had my little chamber witnessed! but, oftenest, alas! it found me happy, with a certain hardening of the heart, far worse for my moral nature than the keenest pain, resolving to free myself from all blame, and to believe that the want of love which I received was in no measure due to my own unlovableness. Here I read hard and studied deeply; here I wove romances and built many gay castles in the air; here I dreamed of the world, and even looked on the world. For from this, my turret window, on many a fine day I could catch glimpses of spires of city churches, and gaze distinctly on the bold outlines of St. Paul's and Westminster: here, therefore, and in my one precious hour spent daily in my father's study, I lived my life.

But now, to-day, I suddenly found myself like a person who for ages has been swiftly and easily going down a steep descent, compelled to stop, to turn round, to go up. My aunt's unkind words had shaken my nature to its depths, I had fled to my one refuge—my father's love.

It had not failed me; it had soothed, comforted,

strengthened, and awakened hope within me ; but it had shown me one thing—we were on different roads, and soon the darkness of the one would shut away the brightness of the other : nay, more, the road on which *his* feet now trod was passing into a glory which no sin-defiled person could approach unto. It was not a gentle touch that stopped me, but rather a blow. One, who was dear to me, was going away, never to come back : to follow him I must go up.

How giddy I felt, gazing along those steep paths of self-denial, self-sacrifice, gentleness, goodness ! I knew nothing then of faith.

I had promised my father I would be a Christian. I *would* be one ; but to-night I would stand still, to-morrow I would begin.

I sat for hours in my little room. I heard the sound of wheels on the gravel outside. Somebody had come.

The children were shouting downstairs. Aunt Hannah's footsteps, busy and rapid, passed by. The room next mine was being prepared. A guest had arrived. I accepted the fact, but without curiosity or interest. After a long time little feet ran up, and a little hand tapped at my door.

I said, "Come in," and entered Tom, aged three, blue-eyed and golden-locked.

"I are having my supper, Dolly, and all the peoples is waiting."

I took the little man on my knee.

"Do you want me, Tom?"

The child's deep-blue eyes surveyed me gravely.

"Will Dolly butter hot cakes for this little boy?"

"Yes, Tom, as many as you wish."

"Then I *are* wanting Dolly, will sit by Dolly."

I kissed him rapturously.

"Little darling," I said, "do you love me?"

"Course I are loving you, Dolly," replied the little child.

"I will come," I said, and rising from my seat, I began to brush vigorously at my untidy hair.

"Who is downstairs, Tom?" I asked, suddenly remembering.

"Big man," said Tom spreading his tiny arms. "Tom 'fraid of big mens and womens, will sit by Dolly."

I took the child's hand, and we went down. Mabel and Lucy, my twin sisters, were standing by the window, Ruth was pouring out tea, Aunt

Hannah cutting bread and butter. Father, mother, the rest of the group were surrounding a strange figure. Such was my first impression. I looked again.

"Here is Dorothy," eagerly said my father.

The stranger turned round quickly. A face not wholly unfamiliar was before me, dark-grey eyes looked at me, a pair of muscular hands were on my shoulders, and the next moment a very warm salute on my lips.

"You are Arthur!" I said.

"Yes, your brother Arthur!"

"Your brother Arthur!" repeated my father in that same eager, tremulous tone. "He has come back to us, Dolly, come back to live near us, quite close to us—in London. She knew you, my son," he added, turning to Arthur.

"I only guessed," I said.

"Well, well, you won't be strangers any longer. He has been appointed House Physician to St. Benedict's Hospital, Dolly."

The joy in my father's face, the light in his eyes, were infectious. The children grew wild with mirth and excitement, and even I forgot my fears, and shared in the general delight. At tea I sat between

my father and Tom. Arthur was at his other side. I had a happy time, for in that position I could afford to forget Aunt Hannah. After the meal was over the children surrounded Arthur. Tom, no longer timid, got on his shoulder, Janet on his knee, Harold and Willie rifled his pockets. They had a game of romps, and then he told them stories to which we all listened. Aunt Hannah bustled about, the rest of us sat still.

My father lay back in his arm-chair, a smile on his pale face, his eyes watching the sunset; it passed behind the hills, and the golden-haired little ones got sleepy, and with half-closed blue eyes went away to their nests. The others wandered into the garden, my mother and Aunt Hannah withdrew, and Arthur, my father and I, were alone. Arthur sat close to him, I knelt on the floor with my head on his knee. I was quiet now and comforted; my half-brother, whom, from a curious chain of circumstances, I knew so little of, had already inspired me with a sense of strength and protection. I marked my father's joy with delight. Now Arthur, whom he loved so well, had come back to him, he would not die. For the present all my fears were lulled to sleep.

I did not join in the conversation. I listened and those two talked together soul to soul. My father spoke of Arthur's mother, he had never mentioned her to me, she had died at Arthur's birth; then of the time when the little boy had been all in all to his father. Old memories, old times, old scenes and stories, how they crowded before the two! I never heard people speak like this before, without a shadow of reserve between. They dwelt on their feelings, their hopes, not on their fears, perhaps they had none. Once I thought I must go away, but my father's hand on my head wanted me there and nowhere else. They spoke of passing events, of their present lives, then, at last, for a long time of Arthur's work.

"In your new appointment you will find just the opportunities you need," said my father.

"I shall gain experience, certainly. I believe I am expected to see the out-patients as well."

"Complaints have reached me of our out-patient system of relief."

"And me. I shall prove their truth now."

"Arthur, do you still love your profession?"

"Still love it! I believe father, if the truth must be known, that I regard it as the finest

profession in the world. My heart is in it. I have a man's dream of accomplishing something in it."

" You can and will do good in it?"

" Yes."

" But doctors are poor men—most doctors are You don't look for a fortune, Arthur?"

" Not I," answered Arthur cheerfully. " One thing I promise you, I will never *stoop* to a fortune; I mean, I will never try to better myself at the price of my conscience."

" Right, Arthur, an unsullied conscience is better to a man than any earthly happiness. You will keep yours so?"

" God helping me, yes!"





CHAPTER III.

IN THE NIGHT.

"Death hides, but he cannot divide,
Thou art but on Christ's other side."

THIS was a glorious summer night, and not a sound. I lay awake in my little bed listening. Most nights there was a low chirping noise from the happy creatures in the grass, a gentle murmuring among the trees, a tiny creaking in the old furniture of the old house. To-night the silence was absolute. Broad awake and listening, I got oppressed by it. I longed for the mice to play, or the spiders to tick. At last I fell asleep. I awoke again in what seemed a few moments. There was a noise now, an indescribable noise of soft hurrying feet, of doors being opened and shut. It was faint and low; perhaps, although there was no daylight yet, the servants were getting up. I listened, nothing more; again I fell asleep.

"Has any one told Dorothy?"

It was my Aunt Hannah's voice I heard, passing my door in the early, early summer morning. The clock on my mantel piece pointed to half-past four. There was nothing in the hour, Aunt Hannah was often up as early; not much in the words, some piece of work she wanted me to do; but a great deal in the tone, there was a sound of pity in the tone.

I sat up in bed, every nerve on tension. My aunt's footsteps died away, and my heart began to beat audibly. I would dress myself and discover this something which I was not told. I put slippers on my feet, wrapped a large shawl about me, and went out into the passage. All was stillness there. The sleeping-room doors were shut. I opened one; Lucy and Mabel lay side by side, breathing gently. I went on to my father's and mother's room. This door was not shut; I looked in. My mother alone was there; she was not in bed, but sat by the dressing-table, her head buried in her hands. I was about to go up to her and speak, when I heard a low moaning sound from her lips, a kind of tearless sob which made my heart stand still. I turned, and with a very faltering, creeping movement, went downstairs. Not a

soul did I meet. I tried to enter the study, the door was locked.

There was nothing uncommon in this, but a fear, a desolation, came over me standing by that locked door, which I have never felt before or since. I shook the handle and tried to cry aloud to my father.

I was still standing there, endeavouring to speak, and shivering, when Aunt Hannah came up. I gave a swift glance into her face, it was blanched; and when she addressed me her harsh voice had a tremor in it.

"Dorothy! child, go to bed, don't stay there in the cold."

I clasped Aunt Hannah's arm with both my hands.

"What is it no one has told me? Tell me now, quickly! quickly!"

"Go to bed, Dorothy," repeated Aunt Hannah, but her tone was very gentle.

"I will not," I answered. "I will not stir from this. Why is the study door locked? I want to go in, I must go in."

"You cannot go into the study," replied Aunt Hannah.

"But I will," I said, in my young, passionate voice.

Aunt Hannah took my hand.

"Come away, Dorothy, this is no place for angry words. Come away."

I was about to wrench myself from my aunt when the door in question was softly opened from the inside, and Arthur came out.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

I looked eagerly into his face; it was pale, but not more so than when last I saw it. There was no fear in his decided tones.

A slight return of hope came into my heart. I turned to him imploringly.

"I want my father. Arthur, take me to my father."

"Yes, Dorothy," answered Arthur, and he opened the study door.

"Surely," said Aunt Hannah, "surely you won't take her in there. The child knows nothing."

"She will learn what she has to learn best here," said Arthur.

"Then I leave you. You are a fool to give the girl such a shock, and Dorothy *did* love her father."

Aunt Hannah went away, and Arthur and I entered the study together.

The shutters were open, and a blaze of sunlight streamed into the room. I looked around me. The old arm-chair was empty, some papers were scattered on the worn leather desk, and on the sofa lay my father. He lay with his face towards us : his eyes were closed, there was a smile on his lips. I went over at once and knelt by his side. My heart had ceased to beat loudly. I stooped down and kissed him.

"Arthur, he is cold, he is very cold. Ought he to be here ?"

"I thought you would like to see him thus, Dorothy, before any one had stirred him. He looks very happy."

"But he is cold," I said, looking up piteously into my brother's face. "Is he ill, Arthur ?"

"No, not ill," answered Arthur ; "our father is quite well now."

"Quite well!" I repeated.

"Quite well for ever, thank God."

I felt a ghastly smile breaking over my countenance as, for an instant, my eyes rested on the face of the dead, then I became unconscious.



CHAPTER IV.

THE BLACK LAMB WASHED WHITE.

"The world is filled with folly and sin,
And Love must cling where it can, I say ;
For beauty is easy enough to win ;
But one isn't loved every day."

OWEN MEREDITH.

NO one had seen my father die.
He and Arthur had parted a little after
midnight, Arthur going to his own room,
and my father saying he had some writing to get
through, returning as he often did to his study.

"How was it he was discovered so long before
morning?" I asked of my brother afterwards.

"He had mentioned some symptoms to me
during the evening," said Arthur, "which made
me uneasy; I could not sleep. I went down
and found him so. He must have been dead an
hour when I discovered him."

"What did he die of?"

"He had disease of the heart—he quite expected to go off suddenly."

Yes; no human eye had witnessed my father's parting breath. When I awoke to consciousness, I thought, as the truth, mist-like, gradually returned to me, that it was a right and fitting end. So, when my turn came, I should like to meet death. Dignified, and alone, I should go to God, without the weeping gaze and anguished terror of surrounding friends; doubtless His was a loving embrace, though it looked so cold. I lay on my little bed for half an hour, then Aunt Hannah bearing a cup of tea in her hand came in.

"You are awake, Dorothy, and quite calm. That is right. Try for once to be unselfish and to forget yourself. Think how small your sorrow is in comparison of the sorrow of others, of your poor mother's, Dorothy."

"How is mother?" I asked.

"You cannot go near her, her woe is terrible. Who can wonder, the widow's grief?"

"And the grief of the fatherless, Aunt Hannah."

"Dorothy, I implore of you not at this juncture

to show your usual selfish spirit. I have brought you a cup of tea, will you drink it?"

"Thank you," I said. I raised the cup steadily to my lips, and drained off every drop.

"That is right, and better than I expected. You may lie there as long as you please. You are not wanted for anything."

She turned towards the door, but I called her back.

"Aunt Hannah, if you don't mind very much I should like you to kiss me."

Aunt Hannah remained motionless for a moment, then she bent down and touched my lips.

"If it pleases you, my dear, I have not the least objection. You always were the strangest child, Dorothy."

"And you forgive me?" I continued.

"Yes, child, of course, of course. Who talks of forgiveness at such moments? But I cannot linger here, you had better go to sleep. I think that tea has excited you."

She left the room, and I turned my face to the wall.

No overwrought feeling possessed me; I was

perfectly calm, even happy. When Aunt Hannah gave me her kiss and forgiveness I felt at peace with all the world. And yet they said that I, who cared for nobody, did love my father, and my father was dead. I knew it, I realised it perfectly. I was not stunned ; on the contrary, my perceptions were peculiarly keen. My father was dead. His voice had ceased to sound for me, his smile would no more beam upon me, his love would no more encompass me.

Reader, think me not wholly heartless, I knew all this, and yet I was happy ; rather, kind reader, believe me when I say, that for that one half-hour I had risen above myself, I was truly and completely unselfish. I rejoiced in my father's joy. The holy life was being now rewarded, the just man made perfect. I loved God for doing all this for him ; I pictured before my vivid imagination the whole scene. My father rejoiced in sunlight ; there was no night there. He had gone through pain ; no suffering in heaven. He had an intense love for purity ; how pleasant those white garments ! His soul was all music ; the harp could bring forth melody.

Then, too, he delighted in intellectual converse ;

how agreeable to speak face to face with St. Paul, to argue with St. James, to ask St. Thomas why his doubts were repeated even in the present generation !

His was a loving nature ; the beloved John could speak to him of love. Was he weary ? He might rest beside the river of life. Did even all this cease to suffice ? I opened my little Bible, "*God Himself shall be with them.*"

The end and aim of my father's whole life had been God ; he was with Him now, he was satisfied.

Called suddenly to God ; how bright ! The sunshine of this brightness glided into my heart, gilding and warming my whole nature. It lay on my bed and illumed my chamber. I lay for one hour, two hours, basking in the light of it, then the first grey tint of earth, and self, and pain, came back. A sudden thought entered like a swift knife into my soul. I had promised God to be a Christian.

To-day I had promised to begin to be a Christian. I must begin. I, who did not care for God, must turn towards God. The things that brought joy to my father had no charms for me. All the better so ; for his sake I would begin.

"Father dear," I said aloud, "farewell, not good-bye. Farewell for a short, short time. I am following you, going up your path, to your ending. Now! I begin."

I rose instantly. I dressed, not as usual, carelessly, untidily. I put on my different garments neatly, I brushed my hair and plaited it tight in two thick coils, and twisted it round my head. Then I tidied my chamber, drew up the blind and let in the sunshine, opened the casement and drank a few breaths of the soft summer air. So far all was right, what came next? Prayer, doubtless. I had a form which I duly repeated night and morning, this would not answer. The Christian's prayer had results, my form had none.

I knelt by my bedside for a long time without words; at last I spoke. After very deep thought these few sentences formed my prayer:—

"God, I am going to be a Christian. I don't understand what a Christian is, but I am going to be one. Will You show me how, and will You help me? I don't ask You this because I love You, or because I feel grateful for anything You have done for me, or because I feel afraid of anything You can do to me hereafter, but because I do

love my father, and I must meet my father again."

This was my first strange, true prayer. I think God heard it.

I went downstairs. The house had that peculiar hushed and solemn feel which all houses with closed blinds possess. I had to stop a momentary impulse to draw them up, to ask myself why they were down.

Redeemed soul! crowned conqueror in life's fight! can it be for you? I went into the dining-room; Willie and Harold were fighting over a coloured picture book, and Tom, his golden hair unbrushed, had fallen asleep on the hearth-rug.

The little boys raised their heads, but on seeing me uttered a cry of disappointment. "Only Dorothy! had it been Lucy, she would have told us the names of these pictures." I felt inclined to turn away in my usual proud indifference, but instead of doing so came forward.

"No, children, I am better than Lucy. I will not repeat the names of those stupid pictures which you have so often heard, but I will tell you instead some fairy stories."

The little boys gave a cry of rapture. They

installed me in an arm-chair, and seated themselves one on each side. Their chubby faces and upturned eyes gazed eagerly into mine. I felt no gratitude for this devotion; the children knew well they had a treat before them, for Dorothy, despised as she was, was unrivalled in fairy lore.

Greater than Hans Andersen was she. The "Arabian Nights," the "Tales of the Genii," contained no marvels like hers. From her own uncouth and incongruous fancy were these stories woven, and she knew well how to blanch the young cheek with terror, and yet, again, how to make the young eyes sparkle and the young voice sound with mirth.

To-day she eschewed gloom, and made her fairy world glow and gleam with fantastic creations. The fairies themselves seemed to ring with laughter. The little boys were convulsed with mirth, the young narrator poured forth exploit after exploit with unmoved face and grave utterance. In the midst of this scene, Lucy and Arthur entered the room.

Lucy paused, stopped, said "Well" twice, then burst into tears.

"I did not suppose! I could not have thought! this is *too* heartless," she gasped.

Arthur had also paused, and when Lucy uttered this cry and said these words, he remained quite silent for more than one moment.

"To whom do you allude, Lucy?" he said then.

His tone had a displeased ring. Lucy felt it through her slight frame, and raised her head in wonder.

"I allude to Dorothy, Arthur. But there is nothing uncommon in this, everybody knows her character."

"Indeed!" replied Arthur. "Dorothy, come here and defend yourself. Your character is impugned, you are accused of heartlessness. There is no person on earth so despicable as a heartless woman, so your sister's charge is a very grave one."

"I am not the only person who accuses her," answered Lucy.

"I grieve to say you are not. I have not been here many hours, but I have heard remarks similar to yours falling from more than one pair of lips. Now, Dorothy, come and defend yourself."

"This is not the time," said Lucy.

"Excuse me, Lucy, it is the time. Dorothy has lost her only defender, the only person who in my hearing has not spoken disparagingly of her. I am not her defender, but I mean to see justice done her. If your words are true, I must use means to remove so baleful an influence from among you; if *not* true, they must not be lightly spoken. Dorothy, come forward. But stay, I will have you all present. Harold, run, my boy, and find Mabel and Ruth, and ask them to come here."

Harold started on his errand, and after a moment's delay my two elder sisters returned with him.

"I think you are all here," said Arthur, "all but little Janet who cannot speak, and is therefore not to be counted. Now, Dorothy, come and stand by me. A charge is brought against you by your brothers and sisters which must be proved or denied. I shall hear them first, you afterwards. But do not fear when your turn comes to speak up and to the point, truthful I know you must be."

I came forward, and after a momentary feeling of confusion, ventured to scan the faces of my young accusers.

Lucy looked red and uncomfortable; Mabel contemptuous; Ruth sensible and determined; Willie, ten years old, stood by, his brown eyes full of tears; Harold was only puzzled; and little Tom still slept.

"Now, Lucy," said Arthur, "explain yourself. Tell me the meaning of that burst of tears and those strange words. I shall listen first to you."

Lucy shrugged her shoulders.

"There is not much use in my speaking, Arthur, but nevertheless, I do repeat my charge. Dorothy never cared for *us*, but I always did think until to-day that she loved our—our"—sobs again choked her voice.

"You always thought she loved our father," answered Arthur, disregarding her tears. "Why have you changed your opinion to-day?"

Lucy's eyes were opened wide in astonishment.

"Why have I changed my opinion? When we came into the room, Arthur, she had those two boys laughing—laughing violently over some nonsense she was telling them."

"I will not defend their laughter, Lucy, though, my dear, believe me, it does not lessen our father's

bliss, nor his little sons' real sorrow for his loss ; but before I go into this, may I ask what *you* were doing all the morning ? ”

“ I,” replied Lucy, “ doing ! not much. I felt so stunned, and my head ached so, I could do but little.”

“ No wonder, poor child, you look tired and not well. But, Lucy, observe how pale Dorothy is. Is she always so destitute of colour ? ”

“ By no means,” chimed in Ruth. “ She is not rosy, but I never saw her look as she looks to-day.”

“ She was paler this morning, Ruth dear, when I saw her standing outside our father’s study door ; pale as death itself a moment later when face to face she and the unconquered foe first met. Your aunt and I were alarmed at the deep swoon into which she sank, and which lasted over an hour. Lucy,” turning to his other sister, “ were you not asked to stay with the boys for a little time this morning ? ”

“ Yes ; but I could not bear their noise, and my head ached.”

“ Dorothy, does your head ache ? ”

“ I don’t mind headaches, Arthur ”

"Indeed! are you tired?"

"Not very tired."

"What means did you use to promote that mirth which has so displeased your sister? I must add, to me it also seemed unbecoming."

"I told fairy stories."

"Did you like telling them?"

"Yes, Arthur."

"Why did you select stories so unsuitable to the circumstances of this day?"

"I could not tell sad ones," I said; and for the first time my voice trembled.

Arthur turned from me to Ruth.

"Ruth, you are the eldest, what is your opinion of your sister Dorothy?"

"Please, Arthur, I would much rather not give it."

"But if I request it as a favour, and demand it as a duty, essential to the peace of this family."

"In that case I will tell you what I think; but Dorothy must not blame me. Arthur, I do not pretend to understand Dorothy. She is very peculiar, she shuts herself away from us, she is sullen and disobliging. I do not think she has much heart or affection, and in short, I cer-

tainly care less for her than for the rest of the family."

"Thank you, Ruth, you have answered me to the point. Now, Mabel, what is your opinion?"

"I do not care for her at all," answered Mabel.

"Then I shall beg of you to say nothing further. Lucy's feelings I think I can guess. Now, Harold and Willie."

"We love her when she tells fairy stories," replied the two little boys.

"What! you don't love her always."

"No," said Harold, "she is cross."

Willie was silent.

"I think I have asked you all," said Arthur. "I heard Tom repeat more than once that he *did* love her. I have nothing further to ask any of you, but before I demand Dorothy's opinion of you, I have a few, a very few words to say. I say these words with pain, for on this day you need comfort, and were it not an absolute necessity your brother would be the last to cause you grief. Children, we have this day parted from a holy man, a life almost perfect has passed from us. That holy and perfect man was our father. How we ought to miss him! how we must and shall ever miss him!"

And yet at this moment of bitter and common woe, we are a divided household. Ruth, Lucy, and Mabel, do you know that by your actions, your manner, your words, you are destroying a *soul*, ay, and in God's presence I say it, I firmly believe a noble soul. She is far from perfection, but are you nearer to it? She has been wrong, she has done wrong, but you have taunted her by your cruel speeches until she does not care to do right. You have shut her out from your interests, your society; you have made her the black sheep in this family. No one has told me, I have not been here, as I said before, many hours, but I have seen it only too plainly. You have cast her from you, out of your lives, but thank God, you have *not* made her heartless, that charge I cast *from* Dorothy, it is more true of any of you than of her. Observe those full grey eyes, that sensitive mouth, they never belonged yet to a heartless woman. To-day we have all suffered, but Dorothy, unless God comes to her aid, has lost her only protector in this unhappy household."

Arthur paused, then turned to me, "What have you to say about your brothers and sisters?"

For a moment there was silence, then, I don't know how it came, I found myself on my knees,

sobbing great tears which seemed to rend my very life away.

"Forgive, forgive! I love you all. I have been wrong; I will do right — for father's sake; for God's sake"—

I would have fallen, but suddenly three pairs of arms held me up, three sisterly faces touched me; my head was on Ruth's shoulder, Mabel's kisses were on my cheek. Lucy's tears mingled with mine.

"Darling, stay still. Arthur, we were all wrong."

And Arthur, with a fervent "Thank God," left us together.





CHAPTER V.

I LEARN OF DEATH.

"At dead of night
I scaled the height
Of giddy question o'er our mortal lot.
My searchings found no answer, brought me not
One ray of light
In that deep night.

" At dead of night
I fought the fight,
Humanity—of all thy pains and woes;
My strength could not decide it, and my woes
O'erwhelmed me quite
At dead of night.

"At dead of night
All power and might
I yielded, Lord of life and death, to Thee,
And learnt Thou watchest with me, and that we
Are in Thy sight
In deepest night."

RÜCKSTÄTTE.



HAD lost my father, but I was one with my family. The black sheep was washed white; ay, for that day, at least, whiter far than she deserved. Lucy and Mabel—older

than me, but younger far in mind and nature—clung to me as children will to a new possession. Ruth, calm, sensible, strong-minded, gave me one long kiss before she left me to attend to our mother.

Dear Ruth! I have quarrelled with the others since then, but never with you ; once plainly show you a wrong, once clearly point out to you the path of duty, and uncompromisingly you would walk along it. With little talent, little beauty, but possessing a great though simple heart, you took things too straight from the hand of God for life to trouble you much.

Dear Ruth! I should like to thank you for all you have done for me, but you are not here.

Mabel and Lucy were twins, and very pretty ; but that evening, as they sat on the hearth-rug, their golden curls touching me, their blue eyes bright and yet humid with unshed tears, I thought them beautiful beyond words to say.

For long hours we three were alone, and to pass the time for them, I wove out of my fertile brain a little romance, tender and yet soothing. They listened with unconcealed pleasure, and when I had finished, begged for more.

As darkness came slowly from the corners where first he had hid himself, and gradually enveloped us until our very outlines became indistinct, my sisters grew nervous and clung to me all the tighter. Death was in the house, and they were afraid. "I had seen it; what was it like?"

"Sleep," I said; but I knew it was unlike earthly sleep, and added no further description. They were not grieving for my father then, they were fearing death, as they would have feared had a stranger died. I pitied them, but without sharing their feeling.

Then they begged of me to sleep with them. Should I mind it *very* much? Mind it! mind any request that night from my own flesh and blood given back to me!

I made them come to bed at once, and lay between them, hushing their heavy sobs, until at last they fell asleep.

Then for hours I stayed quiet, listening to their regular breathing, gazing at their fair young faces as the moonlight fell on them. At last, when every sound was stilled, I rose very softly, pressed a light kiss on each white forehead, and glided from the room.

Death was in the house, and I was going to see him. Alone in the solemn night I was to meet him, to stand by him face to face, to see for myself what garb he wore, what guise he took.

True, I had seen him in the morning, but I felt he would look different now. Then it had been my father, the warmth of life hardly departed, the colour of life hardly gone.

Now it was death.

Without a particle of fear I stepped along the moon-lit passage, and entered the room. It looked bare, white, and awful. The window-blinds were drawn down, and candles were burning.

Why was the moonlight shut out? How unseemly appeared to me this ghastly, artificial glare!

The place was profoundly still; why not? Death was there.

Well, I would keep watch with death; one living, breathing creature should remain for these hours of darkness with the world's great foe.

The night was very warm, but this chamber was chilly. I wrapped a great shawl about me, and drawing a chair forward, sat down by the bed.

Hitherto I had avoided glancing at the dead

face, now I softly drew the sheet which covered it away. I had never seen one lie like this before, and I drew in my breath while I gazed. Here was not the whiteness of snow, of the pure lily; here was the whiteness of decay.

Without doubt this was death ; the closed eyelids would never open ; the eyes, could I but see them, would appear glassy, perhaps colourless—impossible for them to kindle with thought or grow earnest with desire. The mouth, once sensitive as a woman's, was cold and rigid ; about the forehead and closed eyelids there lingered a ghastly smile. I drew away the sheet, and laid my hand on the heart—quite still. Yes, this was death.

I did not doubt it, but I wondered much and sorely could anything so unlike life return to life. I did not believe it at that moment ; I sat stunned and horrified. How dreadful was this place ! how loathsome that grave ! how humiliating this universal decay ! We all were born, cared for, loved for this. We thought, we laboured, we did noble deeds, all for this. Oh ! why ? After a long time of agonised thought, I bent forward and touched my lips to those of the dead ; instead of yielding, they resisted, as marble would, my pressure.

Again and again I tried, then suddenly sprang upright. The fear which the touch of death communicates had taken possession of me; I no longer thought the dead man could not move; I expected the eyes to open, to turn slowly, to gaze at me; I expected the mouth to bring me some awful message from the spirit world. Nay, gazing long with fascinated horror, I felt certain I *saw* a movement, a breath drawn, a sigh come forth from that rigid form. I could not turn away; I was cold, rooted to the spot with supreme dread. The room grew dark and shadowy, and that white figure intensely white. I think I should have fainted, when softly to my nostrils there came a sweet perfume. I lowered my staring eyes a very little, and saw some slightly-tinted roses lying in one marble hand. I knew the roses—they were plucked from a tree which my father loved; nay, more, I knew those particular roses—they were the last of this year's blossoming, and yesterday I had meant to gather them for him myself.

In an instant all fear left me, and sorrow, in a great overpowering flood, came back. This was my father's form, my father who had gone to God. I knelt by the bed, and tears in hot torrents

bathed the cold hand, and withered the flowers it held.

This right hand, how much it had done! how hard it had worked! how many noble and wise thoughts had, through its medium, gone forth into the world! Only yesterday that book of ten years' labour was finished, nay, *not* quite finished. Poor hand! how thin it was! but now at rest. How often, too, it had rested on my head and held *my* hand. Oh, for one more pressure!

"O father! best beloved! you went too suddenly. Speak to me once more, or Dorothy must die!"

I knelt on, now without any fear. After a time even my anguish of heart grew lighter, or rather withdrew itself to lie in wait for me, I knew well, by and by. I felt a kind of satisfaction in being the only one of all his children to watch by my dead father. Now, again, I could gaze without shrinking or fear at those still features.

Death had its own majesty, and doubtless in such quiet, rest must come.

Now, too, it seemed to me that, as all men must die, death was the only thing worth living for; to die well, the only aim of reasonable men.

"God," I prayed, "prepare me to die well."

I stayed quite motionless on my knees for another half-hour, then the room door was gently opened. I withdrew into the shadow of the curtains, and, without being seen, watched some one walk across the room.

It was Arthur. He stood for a moment by the bedside in quiet contemplation, then knelt down. He was a Christian; I would watch him closely, and see how a Christian prayed. I hoped he would speak aloud—perhaps he would thank God, and be very glad that our father was safe in glory. He did nothing of the kind; on the contrary, his agony seemed greater than mine. I heard his lips moving, and saw him rocking himself to and fro. I heard sobs and passionate utterances, even more passionate pleadings. He was in a great strait, this Christian; he was fighting, it almost seemed, with a deadly foe, hand to hand. I thought of David when God hid His face; was He now hiding His face from Arthur? One thing at least was certain, this man was not pleading with the empty air, he was imploring the aid of some one very nigh. After a time he was silent, and remained as one does who is listening breathlessly, and

afraid to lose a word. Whoever spoke in that silent scene was using words of help and comfort, for one by one the heavy clouds passed away from Arthur's brow, he wiped the tears from his cheeks, and at last looked up with a faint but grateful smile. Then he buried his face in his hands, and remained motionless. I longed to get away. This place where God's dead was lying, where God's child had spoken with Him face to face, was too holy ground for me. I made a slight movement, and in doing so, Arthur looked up and saw me. He rose to his feet, and came at once to my side.

"Dorothy, how long have you been here?"

"For some hours, Arthur."

Arthur was silent for a moment, then he seated himself on my chair, and taking me on his knee, put his arms round me.

"Arthur," I said, for I felt strangely excited, "do not send me away to bed; may I speak to you for a little?"

"Indeed you may, dear Dorothy."

"Was God in the room when you were praying just now?"

"Certainly He was."

"Arthur," I continued, pressing closely to him,

"Nor am I ; I shall see him again."

"But you were in great, great suffering, when you came into this room," I said. "When you prayed, it was not like any prayer I ever heard, it was like"—

"What, Dorothy?"

"I cannot explain it to you. If I were starving, drowning—no, being burnt alive—I might cry like that for succour. You are trembling still."

"Dorothy, dear, I will tell you this: it has pleased my heavenly Father to give me a very bitter cup to drink. I feared I could not drink it. I was imploring Him, if possible, to take it away."

"That was like Christ," I said, "and His Father made Him drink it; but He has taken it away from you, Arthur."

"No, Dorothy, He has asked me to follow in the footsteps of Christ, and drink the cup."

"But you looked glad; I saw you smile."

"My heavenly Father has given me strength to drink it."

I was silent then, utterly amazed.

"Arthur," I spoke at last, "I have a great deal to say, do you mind my speaking to you?"

"No, dear, tell me all that is in your heart."

"I am going to be a Christian."

"That is a great resolve, Dorothy; God give you strength to keep it."

"But, Arthur, I don't wish to deceive you; I don't love God or Christ, and I don't feel fear, at least, not much, and I am not sorry for being a sinner; but you are going to see our father again, and I mean to see him too."

"Is this your only reason, just to see our father?"

"Yes, Arthur."

"You must see *One* first whom you have pierced."

"You mean Jesus Christ?"

"And you must love Him best."

"But do you?" I asked. "Do you love Him whom you never saw, better than our dear, precious father, who led so perfect and beautiful a life, and who is now altogether without sin in heaven?"

"I love the Lord Christ *far* better, Dorothy. Our father also loved Him far more than either you or I."

"Then I cannot," I cried passionately. "It

would be a lie to say I could. Don't talk to me of all He has done ; He never smiled at me, or took my hand, or looked at me with loving, tender eyes. My father has been more dear and precious than life to me, and yet I am to give him up, to place him second in my heart. If that is so, I cannot be a Christian."

" You think Christ is unfair to ask all this of you ? "

" I do," I said ; " very unfair."

" Would you tell Him so to His face ? "

" I would," I replied. " I would tell Him that He was expecting me to go contrary to my nature, to love One whom I had only heard of, never seen, and that I could not, *could* not do His bidding."

" Then, Dorothy," said Arthur very gravely, " tell Him to His face, for He is here."

" Arthur ! " I said.

" Yes, Dorothy, He is in this room. Don't waste words on me, tell Him. You are a sinner and not afraid, tell Him that. He died for you, and you have not the least atom of love for Him, tell Him that. Tell Him, Dorothy, all, all."

" He could not listen," I said.

" Your earthly father certainly could not, no

earthly friend could, but try Jesus Christ. Come, you and I will both speak to Him in silence for a few moments."

"I don't like to do it, Arthur ; I think I should be afraid."

"You may well fear your present thoughts, but in telling them to Christ you need have no cause for alarm. Tell Him freely all, and because He delighteth in mercy He will be gracious to you. Come, you tell Him about yourself, and I will tell Him about you. We shall have an answer."

Arthur knelt down, and I, after a momentary hesitation, followed his example ; but where were my angry words ? Why did not my rebellious heart speak out and cry against its God ? I know not. I was silent, or rather silenced by a presence not seen by my mortal gaze, but discernible, though dimly, to a deeper vision. A face rose before me, marred more than any man's ; eyes looked through me, until my inmost thoughts were laid bare. I looked up with fear, and yet without fear. A reverence stole over me ; a love, or what seemed like love, entered into me, for I beheld, though afar off, my Lord and my God.

"Dorothy," said Arthur, when we at last rose

from our knees, "this is perhaps the most solemn night in your life, and I should like to tell you what I think a Christian is."

I laid my head on Arthur's shoulder.

"Darling, the world does not agree with me; those who call themselves on my Master's side do not agree with me, they say I go too far; I do not. A Christian is a man who follows Christ."

"Yes," I said.

"A man or a woman who takes the life of Christ as He lived on earth and *copies* it, makes it his pattern."

"Yes," I said again.

"To do this, Dorothy, you must go exactly the opposite way from the people about you. You must while living *in* the world, be not of it. You may have dear earthly ties, but you must hold them lightly; you must love your enemies, not hate them; you must do good, hoping for no return; you must take up your cross."

"An impossible life," I murmured.

"And yet possible," answered my brother.

"You are living it, Arthur—how?" I asked.

"I am aiming after it, I am striving to attain to it, as you also may strive."

"How, dear Arthur?"

"In this way, and this alone. Such a life as I describe is simply impossible, being as you say contrary to nature, without strength beyond nature. Dorothy, the way, the only way so to follow Christ is to live in daily and hourly communion with Christ; to bring Him down into the daily life, to ask Him to fight with you in the daily battle. To feel His smile as you say you have never felt it, to dread His frown, to hold His hand, to get a little nearer to Him day by day; to have a living Christ always by your side, not a dead Christ to hear about once a week in church. To men who live so, Christ is all, but to the greater number of people He is, I fear, almost nothing."

"Arthur," I said after a long pause, in which I was thinking deeply, "I am not sure yet, but I think I shall choose Christ."

"And having chosen, will Christ be all?"

"Yes," I said, "if I choose Him, He shall be all."



CHAPTER VI

MY CHOICE.

"I have turned away from my sin,
In Thee do I put my trust,
To such Thou hast promised forgiveness,
And Thou art faithful and just."

SOUTHSEY.



UT I did not choose Christ at once.

Arthur had put the matter before me in a new light, and I thought it over with my mind, weighing it on all sides, just as carefully as I felt it through my heart. By my promise to my father, I was in a degree pledged ; but better go back now than later, better never commence than look back when I began to plough in that heavenly field.

For the religion Arthur lived, the religion my father had died in, meant, I saw plainly, a full surrender. No half measures would content God If I became His, I must be His wholly ; body, soul, and spirit must be His ; my time must be

His. If I had talent it must be given to God. Above all, hardest of all, I must give Him the supreme love of my heart.

"Bought with a price," then His wholly. This was the compact, this the fair agreement. But was I willing to be thus purchased, thus to cease to belong to myself?

The conflict within me raged so strongly, that I could neither eat nor sleep. Night after night I lay awake, peering through the darkness, trying vainly to find God, to beg of Him with beseeching voice and imploring gesture to be content with a part, not to take quite all; but neither by word, sign, or token, did God reveal Himself to me. So miserable was I, so undecided, nay more, now and then so *afraid* of God, that my grief for my father's death took quite a secondary position; it was there, but I had no time to indulge it; the question between God and my soul was too momentous to allow much room for other thoughts.

At last the night before the funeral arrived, and I resolved that on that night I would settle this doubt one way or other; on that night I would come to a decision.

I put out my candle and sat by the window. The moon was bright and the stars were shining, I looked up at them in blank wonder and despair, I thought how pitiless God is, how vast and beyond our feeble strength are His requirements. My mind rose against Him, my heart rebelled, when suddenly there was a change. A memory came before me, a memory of a picture in the Dulwich collection. It hangs close to Guido's "St. Sebastian," and Murillo's "Assumption of the Virgin," a sombre piece, inferior in artistic merit to these great master works, but in my imagination to-night, I passed these by and dwelt on it, and as I thought my heart grew full of it, and I was being softened, as all the words in all the Bible had failed to soften me hitherto. The picture in question represents Christ bearing His cross.

I saw the whole scene. The intensely sorrowful face reproached me; the figure, bowed greatly under its heavy load, appealed to me; the women in the background, so close and yet so far away from that unapproachable woe, wept as I should weep. I saw the rope that bound Him to His cross. I saw the worn, thin fingers trying to clasp it.

With this price He had bought me.

Ah, me! I was learning then for the first time how *pitiful* God is, how abundant in mercy. Almost involuntarily this prayer burst from my lips :—

“God, make me willing.”

Then I went down on my knees,

“Christ make me willing.”

I said nothing for a moment or two, then again my voice was heard :—

“Holy Spirit, come into my heart, and make me willing.”

There was silence then, but in the silence voices began to answer me ; in the night-time the Trinity began to speak to me.

“In Me is thy strength found,” they said.

“Look unto Me and be ye saved,” they said.

“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty,” they said.

I listened for more, but only these three promises were given to me. In my mind I went over them again and again. Each moment they seemed larger, fuller, more abundant, until they embraced all life and took in eternity.

After a long period of thought I prayed again.

"God, grant to me Thy strength. . . Saviour of the world, give me salvation. . . Holy Spirit, I am thirsty, let me drink of the water of life."

And as I thus prayed the barrier of ice gave way, the pitiless God became a loving Father, the arms of Christ were around me, the Spirit was pouring a flood of light into my heart.

"My Lord," I sobbed, "I am willing, I am longing now to give Thee all. . . take all."





CHAPTER VII.

OUR DAILY BREAD.

'A religion above nature ought to produce a life above nature.'

REV. E. B. PUSEY.

" THINK in the long run it will always be seen who are really heart and soul Christians, but not always at first or soon. You see acts quickly, it is true, but you do not see the soul of the acts ; they may be done for some secular end, or to exalt self, not for the glory of God. A great divine of our day, quoting from Nicoll, says — 'The good housemaid sweeps the room and prays ; the good watchmaker makes watches and prays,' and so on. And alluding to this very remark he continues, 'Outwardly they would be doing the same acts ; the difference would be seen in the end, by the conscientiousness with which they did them. The street-sweeper who, while he swept his crossing, was

'thinking of the golden streets of the heavenly Jerusalem, would, outwardly, only sweep it more carefully.' You must take your common sense into your religion, Dorothy."

This was said to me by Arthur after my first failure. I had come downstairs on the morning after father's funeral quite determined not only to be a Christian, but to *show* that I was a Christian ; as a matter of course I had failed, and my ridiculous attempts at a pious demeanour had been greeted by Lucy with contempt, and Mabel with derision. They were nearly as spiteful as before our reconciliation. Feeling this unbearable I had rushed off to Arthur, sure of sympathy from him ; but to my surprise he treated my trouble lightly, and did not blame my sisters.

"They know of no change in you, dear, they only see the Dorothy of every day setting herself up to criticise and perhaps speak unkindly of the things she has always joined in heart and soul."

"Any one would know I was in earnest."

"I cannot agree with you. It would take a very nice discerner of character to perceive any difference in the girl who sat by my side at breakfast this morning and the same girl a week ago. I saw

that your brow was calm, I felt that your voice was gentle and pleasant, but remember I am behind the scenes."

"Then, Arthur, what am I to do?"

"Do! put on your armour and use it in just such warfares, and against just such failures as these: for these warfares and failures are those of everyday life." Then seeing my downcast face, he added, "You were prepared to take up your cross?"

"I think I would bear a cross for Christ," I said.

"This is your cross. You must put up for a time with being misunderstood, your motives and aims misinterpreted. In its nature, no cross can be light, and this is a heavy one; but I believe we most of us have to follow our Master in this particular. And, Dorothy, one word of counsel with regard to this cross: bear it cheerfully, the sooner then will it be taken from you. I have seen sorrowful, down-hearted Christians, whom all men passed by, but I never yet saw a bright and happy Christian who did not leave his mark behind him."

The heavy tears rose to my eyes and I turned my head away. Arthur laid his hand on my shoulder.

"I am not forgetting the great sorrow," he said, "but I am also thinking of the greater joy."

"Yes, there is joy," I answered, for I felt that Christ was comforting me.

"Then, darling, let the Christian Dorothy be a brighter Dorothy than ever; you tell stories well, tell them better now; you often amuse the children, amuse them oftener now. What you did do well, do better; what you did do ill, do well; and do all to the glory of God."

"I will try," I said, roused by his words.

"That is right. I want now to speak to you on another subject. Can you come into the garden with me?"

Arthur's tone was so grave that I looked up in alarm.

"Nay, do not be shocked, it is nothing really dreadful; I only want to test your common sense."

He took my hand and we went out together, past the trimly kept lawn, through that delightful garden so prodigal just now with fruit and flowers, into a meadow yellow with crows' foot, white with daisies, and purple with clover. My brother sat down by a little babbling stream, and I threw myself by his side, dipping my hands in the water.

and letting it trickle through my hot fingers. I was in no hurry for Arthur to speak; nature was balmy to-day, and was soothing me.

"Now," said my brother, and at his words I took my hands out of the stream and turned to watch his face, "now, Dorothy, how will you take what I am going to say? You are a strange girl and have something in you, but I am not sure of all the stuff yet. This will prove it."

"Say it," I replied.

"Here it is: you love this place, how will you bear to leave it?"

I had nerved myself for something, but I believe I staggered as one who had received a blow in the only unbearable part. My eyes filled with tears.

"I love this place," I answered slowly, looking on the ground.

"I know it, Dorothy. Well, I have given you the worst at once; now we can talk the thing over. I hardly realise my position with regard to you all yet, and I want you to help me. Will you?"

"If that is possible," I answered.

"It is quite possible. Dear, do you know that we are poor?"

I had always known that. I had heard of it from my earliest years. Mother had always wanted new dresses, and we children the thousand and one things which rich children have and poor have not. Something of this I expressed in my face; Arthur saw it, and shook his head.

"Your look implies that this has always been the case. You are right, you have always been what the world accepts as poor; but, Dorothy, you are poor in a different sense now, in the sense of wanting bread to eat."

"Arthur!" I exclaimed.

"If you stay here you are poor in that sense, Dorothy."

"Then we must not stay here," I answered promptly.

"So I think, and yet when I spoke to your mother this morning about leaving, she said such a step would just break her heart."

"We cannot break mother's heart, Arthur."

"And you cannot starve."

"What are we to do?"

"Dorothy, have you any idea of the value of money?"

"I'm afraid I have not." I answered.

"Well, you must learn. Listen to me now as closely as you can, I want to explain to you something of your money affairs."

"Stay, Arthur," I interrupted, "just turn your face round before you begin; I want to look at you while you speak to me."

Arthur obeyed with a smile.

"Will this do?" he said.

"Yes, brother, go on, I am listening with all my might."

"Our father's income, Dorothy, was, as you have often heard, derived entirely from his writings."

"Of course, I know we all lived on that," I answered proudly.

"He was a clever writer and a profound thinker," continued my brother, "but not a popular writer. He wrote above the heads of the masses, they failed to appreciate or understand him. In consequence, though he wrote hard and never spared himself, he made enough for you all to live on, but never enough to lay by."

I found myself struggling with tears and a strong inclination to quarrel with Arthur.

"I understood papa's beautiful books, and I

always heard they were greatly liked," I murmured.

"So they were, by those capable of loving beautiful books and beautiful thoughts. I only meant that they were not the style of books to bring in a man a fortune, and he made none, Dorothy."

"But he has written another," I interrupted eagerly, "he has just finished it, and he told me often it was the best of all his writings."

"He showed it to me," replied Arthur, "he showed it to me that last night. It is profoundly learned and valuable, and would, I believe, if finished, be worth a large sum; but it is not finished, Dorothy; even the first rough sketch is incomplete, and in its present condition its money value is nought."

"And can it not be printed?" I sobbed; "his last dear, dear book, that he and I loved so well. O Arthur! will you not finish it?"

"I would gladly if I could, dear; but I know very little of the subject on which it treats. I could not even attempt such a task."

"I would give all I have to see it in print, Arthur. The best part of ten long years was given

up to it, must they all, is it right that they all, should go for nothing?"

I spoke angrily, passionately, for at that moment I thought Arthur cold and indifferent.

"There is only one way in which it can be done," he said, not noticing my excitement. "The work must be put into the hands of some learned man for revision. This will require a large sum of money. Dorothy, I will promise you this: the first money I can lawfully dedicate to this purpose, shall be so dedicated!"

"Is this all you can do?" I asked in an indignant tone.

"You are unjust to me, Dorothy," said Arthur sternly, then his voice instantly softening—"You are unjust, because you do not understand. That book is valuable, not only as our father's last work, but valuable in itself for the learning and information it possesses; but other things come first and are more valuable."

"What things?" I asked in a low voice.

"The children's daily bread. Do you think our father would have the little ones starve, that this book may see the light?"

I burst into tears.

"It goes very hard with me, Arthur," I sobbed; "but I know you are right. I will give it up."

"And some day, I doubt not, God will grant your wish and mine, and allow us the means to have it published," answered my brother. "In the meantime I put this MS. into your hands, you shall take care of it."

"May I indeed?" I exclaimed; "and may I read it over, and try to understand it? you know father has taught me Latin and Greek."

"If that is so, you might try to make a fair copy of the whole. Do you write a good hand?"

"Quite good enough for that, Arthur!"

Arthur smiled.

"I see your heart is set on this work, and you shall do it, on one condition."

"Well?" I asked.

"You shall make this your pleasure, and do your duty first."

"What is my duty, Arthur?"

"I do not know, but doubtless we shall find it before long. You tell me you understand Latin and Greek?"

"Father often said I had a very fair knowledge of them."

"Come, that is good. What other things have you a fair knowledge of?"

I began eagerly to count up my acquirements.

"History," I said, "Ancient—Greek and Roman; something of Church History. Modern—English, French, German, Universal. English Literature—Bacon, Addison, Swift. Poetry—Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton; besides, of course, modern books, and poets without end. I like Hood and Byron; Scott's novels are charming; and Tennyson, I do love."

Arthur laughed, "Latin, Greek, history, literature, poetry!" he repeated, "Dorothy, you inspire me with respect for your attainments; of course you know French?"

My countenance fell. Aunt Hannah was our French teacher, and I knew nothing of it.

"Duty, number one, Dolly, you must make up for this deficiency. But come, you have made out a very creditable list for a girl not yet seventeen, I am greatly pleased; you must study hard at home, and in a year or so I may bring you up to London, and get you good masters. But now to return to

money matters. Our father's income, always uncertain, has died with him. He did not mean it to be so, that unfinished book was, he trusted, to realise a sum sufficient for his children's education. As you know, it cannot be so applied, and your mother and her eight children have exactly, from every source, £150 a year to live on."

I knew nothing of money; and to me it sounded a large sum.

"Is not that enough?" I asked.

"It is not nearly enough."

"Then, what can we do?"

"I had hoped your Aunt Hannah could help you, but I find she has only what will support herself. She will continue to live with your mother, and pay her what she has always done for her board, but that is a small sum. It is plain we must do something, Dorothy, as for nine persons to try and live on £150 a year is almost, if not quite, starvation."

"You spoke of our leaving this place, Arthur."

"Yes, I fear there is no help for that."

"But, dear Arthur, you forget we pay no rent here."

Arthur's smile was a grave one.

"I do not forget it, dear Dorothy; but your mother, to whom the place belongs for her life-time, can let it for a very fair sum, and thereby considerably increase her income."

I looked around me at the grass, the trees, the flowers.

"We were all born here," I said, "I think it *will* break mother's heart to go away."

"Were it possible, no such sacrifice should be demanded of her, but with her very small means it would be out of her power to remain here. Now, Dorothy, listen to the plan I have partly sketched out for you. I want you to help me to reconcile your mother to it."

"Yes, brother."

"I am also poor, or you should none of you want. I have my way still to make in my profession, and though with my hospital connection, my future prospects are fair, all I can at present promise is to undertake your education, that, with God's help, I will relieve your mother of."

"Will that cost you a great deal, brother?"

"Something, but not more than I can pay. I inherit money, indeed, the money I now live on, from my own mother—a part of that sum I mean

to devote to my brothers and sisters. I know of a school where Lucy and Mabel may be admitted for about £100 a year. My plan is this: I will send them there for one year or more, and when their education is finished, do something for you. I will also allow your mother £20 a year towards the little boys' expenses. You are clever, Dorothy, and must educate yourself with what help your aunt can give you, for a time."

"And we must leave Dulwich?"

"No, not Dulwich, but this house and place."

"Dear Arthur, if we cannot live in the old home, may we not go quite away?"

Arthur took my hand.

"Poor child! I wish even this small request could be granted, but, Dorothy, you forget the college for Willie and Harold, I want them to go there regularly, and when old enough to try for the scholarships. No, you cannot leave Dulwich, the boys have advantages here they might have nowhere else, and besides you are not very far from me. Your mother must take a small house as close to the college as possible, and with the rent this place will bring in I hope her income will be at least something over £200 a year. It is very

little, very little indeed, but if I take Mabel and Lucy off her hands, and she has no educational expenses, you may manage for a time."

"And you, Arthur, can you spare the money?"

"Yes, Dorothy."

"It does not seem just," I said.

"It is perfectly just. I give you all I can spare gladly and freely."

But my brother's face, always pale and somewhat worn, looked more so than ever while he spoke.

I was silent for a long time, thinking harder than I ever thought in my life before.

"How much, Arthur, will it cost mother to keep me at home?"

"How much? I should think in your mother's establishment your personal expenses must be brought within £20 a year."

"If I were away that sum would be saved?"

"Certainly, about that sum."

I rose from my seat.

"May I think over something, and then tell it you, dear brother?"

"Indeed you may, dear sister."

"But I shall want—yes, I shall want all to-day,
and perhaps all to-morrow."

"I do not return to London before to-morrow
evening, Dorothy. Can you tell me then?"

"Yes," I answered, "I will tell you then."





CHAPTER VIII.

TWENTY POUNDS.

"Fair Duty dawns with her celestial love,
From which the mystic blessing glory grows ;
And glory born of Duty is a crown of light."

T. WOOLNER.

 WENT to my own room and thought it all over. We were poor, we were so poor that Arthur had to deny himself; he had to help us out of his means to the extent of great personal privation. I was sure of this, and felt also that this privation included more than the mere loss of £120 out of his yearly income. This was doubtless a large sum for a poor man to relinquish, and meant the denial of many comforts and pleasures in life. Did it mean anything more? Was some *hope* withdrawn with that money from my brother's future? Was this, *could* this be the cup his Heavenly Father had given him to drink? I recalled his face as it

looked on the evening of his arrival, it was bright with a joy, not only present, but future, radiant with a very decided *earthly* felicity ; the very next night I had witnessed agony which was not, he had himself declared, wholly on our father's account, and though this had long passed by, and his spirit, ever rejoicing in hope, *not earthly*, could be patient in earthly tribulation, yet I felt that his future was marred by us, and our poverty.

Arthur was not our own brother, had not even been brought up with us; we had seen little of him in our past lives; was it right to burden him with our present cares?

I grew impatient under what seemed to me an injustice. I resolved that *I* at least would not cripple my brother. I was strong, I was nearly seventeen, I could work—but how? This was the question, the question which puzzles thousands, born such as I.

I could work, I was willing to work, but what work could I do?

Sally and Susan and Rebecca in the village school, could go as domestic servants; Robert and John and Tom could employ themselves as day-labourers, but for Dorothy Shirley, more

anxious and more needy than any of these, there seemed no work to be done.

"I *will* work," I said aloud, "Arthur shall not have all this burden. I do not think it right, but I cannot prevent his sending Mabel and Lucy to school; but as far as the other £20 goes, I am determined to spare him that." So I said, hoping in my childish ignorance of money and money's value, that this small sum might clear the clouds, at least partially, from my brother's horizon.

Yes, if work could be had, I would work. All that day, through every meal, in the midst of every conversation, in the quiet of every silence, I tried to solve the difficult problem, but no idea would present itself by which I might even hope to earn a few shillings, far less the £20 which seemed so large to me.

At night I knelt down to my evening prayer, and then it suddenly occurred to me to ask help of my new friend, God (not that He was a new friend, but I thought Him so then).

Hitherto I had confined my petitions to spiritual things, begging for love, faith, holiness. Like many a young beginner I thought any other prayer beneath the majesty of God. I was going

through the Lord's Prayer this night, when it flashed upon me how these words took in our daily life, "our daily bread." God certainly meant me to bring this thing before Him. In few plain words I did so, telling Him what I needed and begging His help, and when I rose from my knees a plan was before me, a hateful plan, repugnant to my taste, to my wishes, a plan from which I shrank and turned away, but still a plan which might succeed, and if so, which would save Arthur the £20 I felt he could not spare.

I knelt again and asked God to make me willing to accept this plan, and, if it proved practicable, to carry it out; then I lay down and slept very peacefully. In the morning I rose early, and immediately after breakfast put on my out-door dress; but before I started on the expedition for which I had equipped myself, I sought for Ruth.

I found her in her own room, busily ripping and smoothing out some old stuff dresses.

"These are going to the dyer—Dorothy, I wish you would not wear that hat with crape; where are you to get another?"

"I am going for a long walk beyond the

grounds," I explained, "and will take care of it," I added.

Ruth said nothing. She began to mend a rent in one of the dresses, and her fingers flew along the seam.

"How busy you are!" I said.

"Yes, I must have all these ready for to-night. Arthur will take them to town; it will save the carriage."

She did not ask me to help her, nor did I offer, but I sat down by her side.

"Ruth, am I any use in the family?"

"Well, Dorothy, you certainly might be if you chose."

"But am I any, even the least bit of use, as it is?"

Ruth looked annoyed for a moment, then she smiled.

"Why do you press me, Dolly? can you not answer this question for yourself?"

"I have answered it," I said slowly. "I know I am no use whatever; father *did* want me, but he's gone. I don't mind," I added, gulping down a tear. "Ruth!"

"Well?"

"Arthur was talking to me yesterday, and I think 'tis perfectly dreadful!"

"What, Dorothy?"

"About our being so poor!"

"Well, we shall get along; Arthur will help us."

"But that is what I think so dreadful."

"I don't understand you."

"Why, Ruth, I wonder you don't. Arthur is also poor, and yet he gives us £120 a-year. It is a great sacrifice."

"It is a money sacrifice," replied Ruth; "but he does it willingly, and God will bless him."

"Indeed, He does bless him," I replied; "but, Ruth, it is more than a money sacrifice."

Ruth laid down her work and looked at me.

"What do you mean?" she said.

"I mean this, Ruth, that in giving up this money he gives up more—he gives up some hope which sustained him through, perhaps, many weary days. He is noble, and will do it, but I don't think we ought to let him."

Ruth's face grew pale.

"What do you mean?" she repeated.

"I don't know myself what I mean, Ruth; I know this, that the evening Arthur came

home he was talking to father, and he seemed so bright and joyful; and the next night—Ruth, I must not tell you—but he was in such agony, and he acknowledged to me that it was not all about father, and that he had a trouble; and yesterday, though he spoke quite cheerfully about giving up this money, yet something in his face showed me it was connected with that trouble."

"Well," said Ruth.

"That is all I know, Ruth, only I think we ought not to take the money."

Ruth's countenance cleared, and she resumed her work.

"You frightened me," she said, smiling; "but I might have known it was only Dolly's imagination. Dear Arthur is a good and a Christian man, and he gives us the money freely, and we take it because *we cannot do without it.*"

"You are satisfied with that?" I said.

Ruth's clear blue eyes were raised to my face.

"I am thankful for that," she said.

"Ruth, will mother be willing to leave this place?"

Ruth sighed. "Poor mother! we must soften things as much as we can for her."

"We certainly are to go?"

"Yes, we cannot stay here."

I rose from my seat.

"Ruth, do not wait dinner for me, I may not be back."

"Where are you going, dear?"

I bent down and kissed her.

"Don't ask me now," I said, "I will tell you all when I return."

I went out of the house, ran quickly down the lawn, and, mounting a stile, found myself on the high road.

I had a small railway guide in my pocket, which I now took out and began to examine; then I eagerly looked into the contents of my purse. It was very light, but I had enough for a second-class fare to the place I wished to go to. I reached the station and, taking a return ticket, placed myself in a carriage, and after a rapid journey of an hour and a-half, arrived at the old-fashioned town of Celchester. I may as well at once admit that Celchester will not be discovered under that title on any map of England, nor will the inhabitants of Dulwich, after a railway journey of an hour and a-half, really find them-

selves in a place bearing that appellation; but the true name of this out of the world little spot I do not, for many reasons, care to disclose. The station was on the outskirts of the town, and I had to walk past fields of grass and flowers, as fresh and lovely as in my own beloved Dulwich, for over half a mile.

At last, leaving these behind, I went down by-ways, each more stuffy, hot, and disagreeable, until at last I found myself in a blind alley, close to a tan-yard.

All the houses here were of the worst description, with the exception of one which, tall, massive and sombre, towered above its neighbours. I stopped before this mansion, and pulled with a vigorous hand the rusty old bell.

A woman, in keeping with the bell, and with the house, answered my summons. She too was tall, sombre, and built on a massive scale; she wore a dingy brown dress, black apron, and black, tight-fitting cap; her small beady eyes scowled at me, and said as plainly as eyes could speak—“What business have you here?”

I would not be a coward before this woman, and confronted her boldly.

"Can I see Miss Grant?"

"I don't think you can. What is your business with her?"

"I wish to see her," I repeated; "will you tell her that Miss Shirley, a young lady from Dulwich, would like to speak to her." My father's name was known in the town of Celchester, the woman became a shade more respectful, and with a muttered exclamation under her breath, vanished. I heard eager conversation within, and in a moment or two the dingy hand-maid returned and beckoned to me to follow her. I went through a narrow and dark hall, then through two unfurnished rooms into one little larger than a closet. I did not know whether to call this apartment a study or a library, it was very small, and might literally have groaned under its weight of books. Not only did they line the walls and fill the tables and chairs, but they lay in so many piles on the floor that I found it difficult to steer clear of them. The books were arranged in no kind of order, nor were they new and bright looking; numbers of unbound magazines and musty volumes in old English lay before me, and I doubt not an antiquarian would have found treasures among

them. I glanced eagerly from the room and its surroundings to its living occupant.

Yes, certainly all things in this mansion were in keeping ; here was another faded woman, browner and even more dingy than her handmaid, her face was almost the same colour as the parchments and bindings which surrounded her, her withered, shrunken form looked as old as they. She was seated by a high desk, and was almost lost to view by mounds of books.

When I came in she took no notice of me, but addressed herself to the servant—

“If Johnson says it is a veritable copy, Rebecca, a real, true copy of Jerome, he may bring it round.”

The woman nodded and vanished, and for a moment or two the old lady continued writing.

To judge from the great basket of MSS. by her side, she must have been at this employment for half a century ; her fingers flew along the page, then stopped, and down came the pen with a blot.

“I do hope Rebecca understands. She will offer some price—too high a price—I won’t engage to give any sum until I see the work.

“Now, child, what is your business ?”

The bright dark eyes were turned sharply round and fixed on me.

I drew up my veil, and taking a newspaper from my pocket, pointed to an advertisement and handed it to her. She glanced at it, then threw the paper on the table.

"Oh! this! I put it in some months ago, but no one replied who at all would suit. Rebecca did not like the idea, so I gave it up, though I certainly did want some help."

"May I help you, ma'am?"

"You! what do you mean, child? I want some one"— . . . She paused, my astounding audacity had taken away her breath.

"I don't want a baby, child, I want some one who understands Latin and Greek."

For answer, I took up a volume of Cicero and read aloud, first in the original, then translated into English. Before I ceased, the old lady had risen from her seat.

"Little girl, you astonish me! That is very pretty, very pretty indeed, and your intonation is quite correct. Do you understand Greek?"

"About as well as Latin, ma'am."

Miss Grant became excited.

"And Hebrew, my dear?"

"No, I never learned Hebrew."

"But you are so clever, I could teach you myself: then I should have all I wanted, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. They contain the riches of the world, my dear, all the riches of the world."

I smiled, "I had better keep to what I know, ma'am; you want some one to translate Latin and Greek to you, and to read aloud in the original; I can do that a little."

"Indeed you can, very nicely. Who taught you, child?"

"My father, Mr.

"What! Shirley the scholar! I have read his books, I delight in his books. And you are his child, taught by him, and you would come to me! But would he let you, my dear?"

"My father is dead, ma'am."

"Indeed I dead! what a loss to the world! I wonder I never heard of it, but Rebecca tells me nothing, she would not say what your name was. And you will come to live with me! Rebecca will be wild! wild! but I can't help her. You won't be afraid of Rebecca, child?"

"I don't expect to be at all afraid of her."

The old lady rubbed her hands.

"Ah! that is right; you have spirit, and I like that. It is all settled, my dear, you shall come."

"Stay a moment, ma'am, I must know on what terms you engage me?"

"What do you mean, Miss Shirley?"

"I mean, what salary will you give me?"

Miss Grant's countenance fell, she eyed me sharply from head to foot.

"How old are you?" she asked.

"I shall be seventeen in a month."

"Phew! you are only a baby. I will give you board and lodging, that is a very fair return for what you will do for me?"

"I do not know yet what you require me to do for you, but I cannot come for that," and I rose from my seat.

"Stay," said Miss Grant, "you seem a clever girl, and I rather take to you. It is a great stretch, but as you are Shirley's daughter, I will give you in addition £10 a year."

"It is not enough," I repeated firmly. "Miss Grant, I will state to you my terms, and, if we agree, I can come to you any day after this week you like to name.

"I ask from you board and lodging and £20 a year. In addition, I also ask two hours of every day completely at my own disposal; you can give them to me any time that will best suit you. In return, I give you all the rest of my time."

Miss Grant looked puzzled and undecided. "You ask a great deal," she said, "I don't know how I can meet your wishes. If I do, Rebecca will half kill me; . . . and yet I like you, you are clever, you would amuse me vastly; but stay, my dear, are you religious?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Don't know! that is strange. I am a very religious woman, my dear, my whole life is given up to religion. Stay, as you are coming to me, I may as well tell you how I am employed. I am writing a Commentary on the Book of Job, Miss Shirley; it is in that great work I should require the assistance of a Hebrew scholar."

"That is an immense work," I said.

"So it is, my dear, immense! Oh! I like you. You shall come. Of course you hold the doctrine of the Atonement?"

"Certainly, Miss Grant."

"And you don't hold justification by works?"

"I don't quite understand you, ma'am, but I will ask my brother."

"Your brother!"

"My brother, Dr. Shirley."

"Ah! he is a doctor, so is my cousin. Don't let that out to Rebecca, she hates doctors."

"Indeed, ma'am."

"Yes, she has a long story about them; some neglect when she was an out-patient at one of the London Hospitals. The poor woman has a stiff arm ever since. Oh! she will tell you the whole tale when you come."

"Am I to come, ma'am?"

"Well, I suppose you had better. Come this day week, be here by two o'clock, my servant is never in the house then. There! run away before she comes back. You can let yourself out?"

"Certainly, Miss Grant."

"Here, come by this door; Rebecca thinks she closed it up, but I opened it again."

She touched a spring, revealing a passage leading to the front entrance.

"Good-bye, until this day week," I said.

"Be here punctually at two o'clock," called back Miss Grant.

I shut myself out, but the musty air of the dingy old hall pursued me down the street.





CHAPTER IX.

WHAT THEY SAY AT HOME.

" From the low earth round you,
Reach the heights above you ;
From the stripes that wound you,
Seek the loves that love you.
God's divinest burneth plain,
Through the crystal diaphane
Of our loves that love you."

MRS. BROWNING.

 RETURNED home, feeling a little frightened and a little triumphant. I had engaged myself as companion to Miss Grant, without my family's knowledge. I had done this purposely. Knowing there would be strong opposition, I had determined to make it an irremediable step, before I acquainted them with it. But now that the deed was done, I felt frightened and rather shrank from the storm which awaited me.

How should I tell them? singly, or together. I determined to beard the lion in its den. Accordingly after dinner, before any of the family had dispersed, I spoke.

"Ruth, I will tell you now where I went this morning?"

"You were out a long time, Dolly."

"Yes, I was at Celchester."

There was a chorus of exclamations.

"I went to see Miss Grant, in Beer Lane."

"Whoever is she?" asked Lucy.

"What for?" asked Mabel.

I rose from my seat.

"Mother, I will tell you what for."

I knelt by my mother's side, she took my hand in hers.

"Well, darling?"

"Read this, mother," I said, pointing to the advertisement which I had before shown to Miss Grant. "Read it aloud, mother."

My mother read:—

"An elderly lady wants a companion who can read well aloud, and who understands Latin and Greek. Apply to Miss Jane Grant, Beer Lane, Celchester."

"Why do you show me this, Dorothy?"

"Mother, I am going to be Miss Grant's companion. I went to her to-day and found she was still without one. I have engaged myself to her, mother, and am going this day week."

A chorus of "Ohs" from the children; Arthur and my mother were both silent; Aunt Hannah began to storm; I did not listen to her reproaches, I bent again over my mother.

"Speak, mamma, say you are not angry."

"I don't understand you, Dolly, why do you wish to leave me?"

"I would rather stay with you, dear mother, but we are poor, we are very poor, and I ought to do something. I was never much use in the family, mother, and now I can support myself."

But how closely are the children of one father and mother linked together. I found myself surrounded by my brothers and sisters.

"Don't go, dear Dolly!"

"You tell such lovely stories!"

"You are so nice in the evenings!"

"We don't mind if you are cross!"

"You are our own, dear Dolly!"

"Dolly, if you stay I'll give you Robinson Crusoe," said Harold.

"You shall fly my new kite," said Willie.

And Tom clung to me and cried.

I looked round at them all, and my eyes began to swim; I glanced at my mother's pale, sad face, and my tears flowed as if my heart would break. But for all that, when my sobs had ceased, when the children were silenced, and my plans more fully explained to my mother and Arthur, they both agreed that the thing was possible, and might be desirable.

I should be within a short distance of home, my education would be in a degree carried on by my daily readings to Miss Grant, and doubtless with our present funds, one less to count for in the family expenditure was much to be wished.

Arthur agreed at once to start for Celchester, make inquiries about Miss Grant, and call to see her. If all turned out satisfactory, I might try it.

That afternoon I sat with my mother and Ruth, loving them with that sensitive affection which at such times amounts to pain. In a week I should be gone, and have only the memory of

their gentle ways, their true and dear faces. Soon, too, we should all be away from the beautiful home of our birth and childhood. The great trees on the lawn would spread forth their branches for others to sit under, the fruit in the garden would ripen for others to gather, the flowers would blossom, and fill the air with their perfume, for others to enjoy.

I was helping Ruth to take the braid off a dingy old dress and thinking over this parting. Could Christ help me here? I thought over the life of Christ, had *He* ever gone through a trial like this? had He exchanged the love of home for the coldness given to a paid hireling? the brightness and beauty of this lovely place for the dingy atmosphere of Beer Lane? I felt He had, for was not heaven the home of love, and He had left that, He had left the brightness of His Father's glory for a world where He had no place to lay His head. This was a hard trial, but Christ had gone before me, and I could follow.

"How bright you look, Dorothy," said Ruth in a whisper, for our mother had fallen asleep.

"I have been thinking, Ruth."

"What of, dear?"

"Something about Christ."

Ruth was silent for a long time, at last she bent forward and touched me.

"Dorothy, dear, tell me, do you care for these things? Are you a Christian?"

"I am trying, Ruth."

"I never knew that," answered Ruth.

"I have only been trying for two days, dear Ruth."

Ruth was never demonstrative, but now she rose, and put her arms round my neck.

"I have been trying for two years."

But there was no need to tell me that. In the peace on her broad, white forehead, in the light in her clear eyes, I read those two years' history.

Just before tea Arthur came back. He called me to him, and drawing my hand through his arm took me into the garden.

"Dorothy, I have seen Miss Grant, and—and—dear, will you give up this plan?"

"If you and mother command me to do so, I must, Arthur, but not otherwise."

"We are neither of us likely to do that. I have made strict inquiries, and so far as respectability goes, the situation you seek is irreproachable.

Miss Grant is a lady: indeed, her cousin is a friend of mine, so I know all about the family, but"—

"Well, Arthur?"

"Child, I have, as I told you, seen Miss Grant, and I fear—I fear much, she is not the person to make you happy."

I felt my heart re-echo his words.

All day long, ever since this idea had presented itself to me, I had found growing up within me an almost unbearable repugnance to it; nothing but the strong love I had for Arthur, the conviction that it was my duty, and the feeling that God was on my side, could have carried me through with it.

As to happiness, with the heroic element, often so strong in the young, I had put it from me, thinking, poor, foolish child, that my life could prosper without it. Now I turned to my brother.

"I don't expect to be very happy, but that is not necessary."

"Why do you say so, Dolly?"

"I mean, I can give up being happy for a little time."

"You cannot do so without injuring yourself; happiness is essential to the well-being of every human soul."

"If that is so, Arthur, I must not go to Beer Lane."

"Sit down here, Dorothy, I have only a few moments to give you, but I will try to explain myself. If you go to Beer Lane, you must determine to be happy there."

"Why, Arthur, how strange you are. You said just now, Miss Grant could not make me happy."

"And I think so still. As well put a wild bird from the woods into a cage in a dark room and expect it to rejoice, as suppose that this free, unfettered spirit could of itself prosper in Beer Lane."

"Then what am I to do? am I to give it up?"

"That you must decide for yourself; but if you go, I would have you get ready for it."

"You mean, Arthur, that I am to get Christ to help me; He has helped me all through. You did not really suppose I liked this plan?"

"I could hardly suppose that, dear."

"It was this way," I said, laying my head on his shoulder. "When we had that talk yesterday, and I found how much you had given up, I quite determined to put my shoulder to the wheel, to do something myself. Was this wrong, brother?"

"Very far from wrong."

"All day long I thought, but there seemed no possible way in which I could do the smallest thing, until at last, just before I went to bed, I thought how foolish I was not to ask God, who just knows the right way to help every one, to put some plan into my head, and immediately after I remembered an advertisement which father had read to me three months ago. He had laughed when he saw it and said, 'This would just suit you, Dolly.' I went downstairs at once and got a file of the "Times" and looked through them until I came to it, and then to-day I went off to Celchester and found the house. Miss Grant had never got a companion, and she seemed pleased with me and agreed to take me. I do think God wishes me to go, Arthur."

"Well, Dolly, it requires a brave heart and great strength, but with these you may go and prosper."

"But I am weak, I feel very weak now."

"Take Christ with you, with Him is abundance of strength."

"Take Him with me?" I questioned.

"Yes," continued my brother, "and what is more, you *must* take Him into that house, or you dare not go."

I was silent.

"And you must live Christ there, Dolly."

"Tell me how, Arthur?"

"Nay; He Himself must tell you how. But think a little of His life, for if you follow Him, that life must be your pattern.

"He denied Himself, He made others happy, He lived for others, He, at last, gave up His life for others. Now think *whom* He loved; not only those who worshipped and adored Him, but His enemies. Whom did He die for? His enemies again, those who spit on Him and crowned Him with thorns.

"Dorothy, was Christ a happy man?"

"Hardly that," I said, "most blessed, but hardly happy."

"I do not agree with you; it is my firm conviction that no man ever trod this earth before

or since, who had one thousandth part of the happiness of Christ. No man's sorrow was like unto His, equally, was no man's joy. We, whose hearts are so sin-defiled, cannot even approach unto it. Think of the blind receiving their sight, the dead their life. Think of the lost found, the sinners forgiven, the wanderers brought home, the evil world purified and restored to the Father. Think of all this, and with it let this other thought nerve you, that in proportion as you follow Christ, so will His joy be yours. M'Cheyne says, 'Ask little, and you will receive little; ask much, and you will receive much; ask all, and you will receive all, and your joy will be full.' Will you ask for little of His Spirit, Dorothy, or for all?"

"I will ask for all."

"Then so living, you may go to Miss Grant's, and have a far happier life than you ever had before. Yes, Dorothy, happier far than when surrounded by your father's love and encompassed by the brightness of your home. You will possess a happiness that your circumstances cannot touch."

"Do you indeed think so?" I said.

"I think it and know it. Tell Him everything

that happens to you, all that is in your heart, treat Him ever as a living friend by your side, dwell in the sunshine of His presence, never let sin get between your soul and Him. Sin you will, fail you must, but do not on these occasions lie down in despair; go straight to your Saviour, stay with Him until you have His forgiveness, and then in His strength go on again. Now, Dorothy, I must leave you, I may not see you for months, as I expect to be greatly occupied, but you and I have had such an interview together, have gone through so much in each other's company as has bound us together by no common tie. We are not likely to forget each other."

My cheeks were wet with tears, I clung to my brother without speaking.

"Dear, I should like you to write to me."

"O Arthur! may I indeed?"

"You may and must. You shall write to me once a-week, and I will reply to you. Tell Christ everything, and after Christ tell me. Look on me as your best earthly friend, Dorothy, one to whom you are very dear."

Arthur rose from his seat. I rose also and put my arms round his neck.

"Brother, Miss Grant is to give me £20 a year; I may pay for the little boys' schooling?"

"You must have some money, Dolly."

"I do not want it. Ruth will send me clothes when I require them. I have plenty for the present."

"Do you wish to do this?"

"More than anything," I replied.

"You may try it then, but when you want money you must write to me. Will you?"

"When I want it, Arthur."

"You shall help then, you shall for a time, at least, put the boys to school"

"And you will have £20 more every year."

"Well, I suppose so. Do you wish this also?"

"What I do, Arthur, I do for this."

"My dear, dear child, is this indeed so?"

"You will keep the money, brother?"

"Yes, certainly;" this with a kiss on my lips.

"Dear brother, can it, will it help you to have?"—

Arthur's dark eyes looked steadily into mine.

"Well!" he said, for I had paused, half startled by his expression.

"Brother, to have your wish—your hope."

"My dear, I have many wishes; I shall not be so crippled now."





CHAPTER X.

ONE FAMILY, WE DWELL IN HIM.

"Up, then, and go amongst them ; don't be timid ;
Look at them quietly a bit ; by and by
Respect will come."

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

 N a week's time I went to Miss Grant's.
My last few days at home were too busy
to be altogether sad, I had not only my
own things to pack and get ready, but had also
to work hard in helping to prepare Lucy's and
Mabel's school outfits.

Arthur had made every arrangement for them,
and they were to leave soon after me.

How incessantly we all stitched in that little
faded, oak-lined parlour, how we tried on, and
fitted and altered, and how pretty my sisters looked
in their fresh mourning.

My own preparations were few and slight, and I
found myself capable of assisting others. In that

week I first began systematically to deny myself, for be it known that I had an intense natural distaste for needlework, and now I stitched all day; I hated confinement, and longed to roam abroad and visit every familiar nook, and say farewell to every dearly-loved place for miles around, but I stayed in-doors until far too late for such wanderings. I denied myself, and I had my reward.

I was no longer the black sheep. Nay, as the days sped on, I found myself looked up to, consulted, respected.

My spirit glowed at this conviction. My mother, my brothers and sisters loved me, would miss me; without Dorothy, there would be a gap no one else could fill up; when Dorothy was gone she would not be forgotten.

In those sweet and holy days, the last I ever spent in the old home, even Aunt Hannah was kind to me.

They went quickly bye, and the time and the hour arrived for me to pack my small box preparatory to departure. I went to my room for the purpose. I had collected my few possessions, and now had only to place them in the box. In

the bottom I laid my father's precious MS.; by its side my desk, then all the copies I possessed of his published works, my own books, and then my small wardrobe.

My task was a little one and quickly over. I shut down the lid of my box and locked it. In half-an-hour the railway porter would call for it, in an hour I myself would be away.

I knelt by the side of my little white bed and covered my face; a great weight of tears lay near my heart, but not one did I shed. God was not near enough, I had not strength sufficient for this day. I wanted many things, how should I ask for them? how should I begin?

Suddenly I determined to ask for nothing. "I will tell God that I am a child going out alone into the world," I said. "I will remind Him that I am *His* child, and He is my Father."

I did so and felt immensely comforted.

Just then there was a small tap at the door, a hand put in a little parcel carefully made up in white paper and disappeared. I took up the parcel and opened it, wondering. The wrapper off, a box appeared, and in the box lay a tiny silver watch. I raised it from its case with trembling fingers, I

unclasped the outer cover. Inside was a brief inscription, I read—

"For our own Dolly from her sisters

RUTH,

MABEL,

LUCY, and

JANET.

And from her brothers

HAROLD,

WILLIE, and

TOM.

In memory of July , 18 .

This was the date of our father's death, and our reconciliations. With an exclamation of mingled joy and pain I ran, watch in hand, down-stairs.

"Does you like it, Dolly?" asked little Tom. I turned and clasped him in my arms, wetting his curly head with the tears which now flowed freely.

"Tom did give sixpence," continued the child.

"It was too much," I said, looking round at the group; but Ruth's blue eyes smiled at me, Mabel and Lucy kissed me, Harold and Willie placed

the chain—only a common black one—round my neck, and Janet, asking to hear the “tick, tick,” put the watch to her ear.

“Take it, dear, as the seal of the past, and sign of the future,” said they all.

Aunt Hannah then came forward.

“You can’t go away with an empty pocket, child ; here is a sovereign, with my love.”

Just before I went, my gentle, loving mother put her arms about me.

“I can only give a blessing to my darling.”

“It is better than all,” I said. And so, amid tears, kisses, and blessings, I went away.

I was punctual to the appointed hour at Miss Grant’s ; the terrible Rebecca was out, and the old lady answered my summons on the rusty bell, herself.

“Come in, come in, my dear. The porter has just left your box ; I am in such a fright : luckily Rebecca was out, or I don’t know what I should have done. See ! do you think you and I could get it upstairs before she returns ? ”

“You must not try such a thing, Miss Grant, I will help the servant when she comes in ; I am in no hurry to have my box opened.”

"But, my dear, she does not know, I have not told her, that you are coming."

Now, I had quite penetration enough to see that Miss Grant was ruled by Rebecca, and quite determination enough to resolve that fear of her should in no measure influence my conduct ; however, seeing that the old lady was really frightened, I thought a moment, and then resolved to humour her for the present.

"In that case, ma'am, if you will kindly give me a little help, we will try and get the box upstairs."

I was very strong, and the burden, as I meant it should, fell on me ; but the little box was heavy with books, and we both had hard work, and were thoroughly exhausted by the time it had reached its destination. Then I found myself in a low, dark room, looking out on the tan-yard. I went up to the windows, but beyond certain evidence to my olfactory organs that the tan-yard lay below, could not ascertain much, for, though destitute of all attempts at blinds, they had evidently not been cleaned for years.

"This is my bed-room. You don't mind sleeping with me, Miss Shirley ?"

I glanced at the bed with its torn counterpane, its not over-clean linen ; from it to the mahogany coloured, faded old woman, and brave as my spirit was that day, I shrank back in dismay.

"This seems a very large house, Miss Grant, and if you please I should much prefer a chamber to myself."

"There are lots of rooms, my dear, lots of rooms, and heaps of beds, beds with the best feathers in them, worth any sum. 'Tis only Rebecca"—

"Well, never mind," I said more cheerfully. "I'll sleep wherever will be most convenient to-night. Now, shall we come downstairs ?"

We were both in the little study, Miss Grant busy over her MSS., and I, on my knees trying to sort some periodicals, when the hall door bell sounded ominously.

The old lady started up, her face grew pale and she clutched my arm.

"She has come ! Oh ! dear Miss Shirley, you had better—hadn't you better *hide* ?"

"Very well," I said demurely, and walked before Miss Grant's astonished eyes out of the room.

I went to the hall door and opened it wide.

"Come in, Rebecca, you are rather past your time, and your mistress is waiting for dinner."

The look of utter bewilderment on the sombre face of Miss Grant's hand-maiden would have obliged me to laugh had I not felt it incumbent upon me to preserve a grave exterior. The woman gazed at me with eyes too astonished to speak.

"You wonder who I am, and why I am here," I said. "Well, my name is Miss Shirley, and I am here because your mistress has engaged me as her companion. Will you kindly hurry with dinner, Rebecca, as after that you have to get ready a room for me to sleep in to-night. It was a great over-sight not having it prepared before."

I gave her no time to reply, I did not even look at her, but I felt as I returned to the study that I had conquered Rebecca.

"Well?" said Miss Grant, who I strongly suspect was listening.

"Well, ma'am, I told Rebecca to prepare a room for me to sleep in to-night."

"My dear, you ought not, you don't know Rebecca. What did she say?"

"Nothing, Miss Grant."

"Nothing, my dear?"

"No, ma'am, she did not speak. I told her to hurry with dinner, and I expect she will bring it up directly. Shall I clear this table?"

"Oh! I never have that done, I just have a tray in my lap."

"But there are two of us to-day, and we could not manage nicely in that way. See! if you don't mind, I will move your desk and these books; I won't disturb anything." Miss Grant was also too astonished to speak. I cleared the table and dusted it, in lieu of anything else, with my pocket handkerchief.

"Now, that is nice," I said; "and when dinner is over I will read to you out of any book you please."

"My dear," said Miss Grant, looking at me half in bewilderment, half in admiration, "you are a wonderful girl."

"I am nothing of the kind, ma'am, I am thoroughly commonplace, but I mean if I can to make you comfortable."

The old lady rubbed her hands and smiled. "Don't tell me," she said; "I know what you are, but it all comes of being a scholar's daughter."



CHAPTER XI.

IN YOUR PATIENCE POSSESS YE YOUR SOULS.

" Face to face with the true mountains
I stood silently and still,
Drawing strength from fancy's dauntless,
From the air about the hill,
And from Nature's open mercies, and most
Debonaire good-will."

MRS. BROWNING.

INTO this house of faded women I had voluntarily brought my fresh young life, and I firmly resolved to brighten its dinginess and to bring colouring to its withered, dried-up inmates.

This, however, turned out to be no easy task; both these women were characters, but characters of the past; the present day, the present busy, active world, had no interest for them whatever.

Both mistress and maid had a world, but it was a world of dead men, of lifeless inanimate things.

Rebecca had no friends in the little town of Celchester: she purchased the few necessaries required for our establishment in the nearest shops, and even then never spoke except on business. Miss Grant had not stirred out for years. The mistress spent her days and half her nights with Plato, Socrates, Homer; Cicero and Virgil were looked upon as recreations, and the lives of the Fathers did for Sunday reading.

Noble food this, but too strong for Miss Grant's digestion—she passed over beauties, she failed to take in meanings, as my father had taught me to receive them. In short, she had an overdose, and what should have given life and health, was bringing to her disease and decay.

The maid also had her literature, and it, too, savoured of the past. By her kitchen nook I discovered that she devoured Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and though she would have scorned to glance at a recent periodical, in her lighter moments, I found that she unbent to Miss Burney.

I too loved books, I had been brought up among books, taught to reverence them when worthy of reverence, but my father had taken care while cultivating my classical taste to bring before me

all the fresh ideas of modern thought; he had cautioned me against narrow-mindedness, and had given a width and solidity to my education which few girls receive. What I did know, I knew well; the foundation was strong and firmly laid. But in this house I began to hate books, to turn from them with almost loathing.

I had asked Miss Grant to give me two hours daily to myself, and these two hours I had intended to devote to the all-important manuscript; but after spending my whole morning with Miss Grant's Homer—who I began emphatically to declare was *not* my father's Homer—I found myself obliged to leave these worthies, and putting on my hat would wander forth into the green fields and lanes which abound round Celchester. Here, seated under a hedgerow, I used to arrange my scattered thoughts, and try to soothe my often perturbed spirits; and here I generally found the refreshment I needed, for not the soul of my father's manuscript, but I sometimes believed the soul of my father himself came to me, so strong did I grow in those hours of quiet thought.

Certainly my father's God was with me, and each day that I had followed Arthur's advice and denied

myself, each day that I had been patient with Miss Grant and gentle with Rebecca, then each day God seemed to come a little nearer, and His smile and right hand of loving fellowship were more distinctly felt. I began to understand what Arthur meant by a living Christ.

Sitting under the hedgerow in those summer evenings I began to talk to Christ as I would have talked to my father or brother, until gradually but surely He took a nearer place than any father or brother, and I told Him things I could have whispered to no one else. After these conversations, in which I felt Christ had answered me and given me help and counsel, I came back with my whole heart full of brightness to the dingy house in Beer Lane, and part of this brightness I endeavoured to impart to its aged mistress. Sitting together at our tea, which was now a tolerably comfortable meal, I told her of the trees and the grass and the sunset. I gave her not always my own ideas, which I felt were too crude for her to listen to, but the thoughts good modern books had imparted to me of these things, and whenever I could I brought her home some wild flowers. She was patient with my narratives, sitting silently with closed eyes

in her dismal corner, but she never expressed pleasure at my words; the flowers I gathered and put into water she appeared never to see, and by the next morning they invariably disappeared.

But I think as the weeks and months went by Miss Grant learned to love me; she certainly valued my services, and missed me when I absented myself too long from her presence.

With Rebecca the case was different. From the first I had so far conquered her as to make her treat me with respect; but I believe she had a very thorough dislike to me. She could not forgive my entrance into this house, and the more influence I obtained over her mistress the stronger did her enmity grow.

This enmity she showed in the manner peculiar to small and uneducated natures. She did her best to make me uncomfortable; she altered the dinner hour so as to interfere with my daily work, she turned off the gas, when at night I wished to write to Arthur; she could do me no real injury, but in a thousand small ways I felt, and felt sorely, her strong aversion to my presence. Of course, I was often impatient and struggled against this daily trial, but on the whole I pitied Rebecca and

endeavoured to soften her towards me. She was in truth a most extraordinary character, and looked like one who in a very sharp school of adversity had come out soured and hardened. She had a past and a history, probably a dark history, but of this no one knew anything.

For ten years she had lived with Miss Grant, and during that time had gained a complete ascendancy over her gentle old mistress, indeed *she* was the true mistress in the house; but of her life prior to her residence in Beer Lane nothing was known.

On one occasion I ventured to question her about her right arm, which was stiff and nearly useless.

"Miss Grant tells me you were neglected in a London hospital," I said.

Never shall I forget the blaze of terror and distress in her small black eyes.

"Who said it was London?" she exclaimed. "I know nothing of London. I have never been there. Who said it was in a London hospital?"

I hastened to re-assure her.

"I don't care where it was, Rebecca, but my

brother is connected with hospitals, and I don't like to believe that people could be neglected in such excellent places."

"Keep your own idea of them, miss, and I will keep mine. I know nothing about in-patients; I daresay they are well enough. My sister died in an hospital, and from all I heard, she got nourishment reg'ler and plenty of care. But for outpatients, as they call 'em, all I can say is, that hospitals have ruined me for life."

"What do you mean, Rebecca?"

"Why, what is a woman to do with a useless right arm? 'Twas broken, and here's what your fine charities, that you think so good and *religious*, gave me."

"The hospitals did not break your arm."

"No, but did they mend it? Here's where it is, if you *will* know. Six months before I came here, I broke my arm (quite a simple break it was) and I went to an hospital, I won't say where. I was put into the hands of a young fellow who set it and bandaged it up. I went away, and was told to come back in a week. I did so. Somebody saw me for half-a-minute, just looked at the bandages, and said they'd do very well for another

eight days. Back I came at the end of that time ; again, the same story. Well, Miss Shirley, if you will believe me, though I don't care whether you do or not, this went on for seven weeks. Never once was my arm touched. I thought it was all right, though it felt very dead and queer. At last, one morning, a different kind of gentleman saw me,—I expect he was the first real doctor I had laid eyes on ; he asked me a few civil questions, and when I told him the bandages were on for seven weeks without being opened, he could hardly believe his ears ; he took them off that day, but the arm still felt dead and stiff, and nothing could be done for it."

"I can hardly credit such a tale, Rebecca, you astonish me."

"I don't want you to credit it, miss, them as don't feel don't believe. Hospitals have done for me, that's all."

"But you are comfortable here ?"

"Do you call it so ? Banished from everything and half-starved."

"Well, we have not very comfortable meals, but if you don't like it, why do you stay ?"

"What other place would I get with this arm ?

That's why I declare the hospitals have ruined me."

"Rebecca, is Miss Grant very poor?"

"Poor! what's that to you? *you* have enough."

The look of terror and distrust had returned to her unpleasant face, and she would reply to no more of my questions.

Miss Grant had long ago confided to me her own history, it was an unromantic one.

Her father had owned the tan-yard close by, and had built this house in conjunction with it; he had made some money, and she was his only child. At his death she had sold her interest in the tan business, but had retained the house.

"Here I was born, my dear, and here will I die," she had said. "Rebecca tells me it is a large and expensive house, but I say I will not leave it."

"I should hope there was no necessity for such a step, Miss Grant. You must surely have money enough to live here."

"I should think so, my dear, but I don't know; Rebecca manages for me, all but a certain sum I have retained for the purchase of books. I cannot

attend to sordid cares, and my great commentary as well."

"How long has she managed your money, ma'am?"

"About two years. I did not care to give up my money, but she begged of me to trust her; she saw how my mind was divided, and how the Book of Job would not harmonise with £ s. d."

We have all hobbies, many of us have grand hobbies. Miss Grant's grand hobby was the Book of Job. How she worried herself over its character and composition! how she distorted its plainest passages, and proved to her own satisfaction that Mercer and Abbott of ancient days, and Carey and Ewald of the present time, with all the other commentators on this most difficult work, were wrong. She only had discovered the true country, descent, and age of Job. In this occupation, I am thankful to say she never claimed my assistance, considering me, very rightly, quite incompetent to render her any aid. She began this work when I went to bed, and what progress she made and what faults she corrected I have never learned. In the mornings I read to her out of the philosophy of Plato, taking in, notwithstanding her fanciful inter-

pretations, many new and grand thoughts from the scanty intercourse my partial knowledge gave me of this noble spirit.

It was a strange life, perhaps for one so young a stern training ; but doubtless God knows better than man what school is best for His children, and in writing to Arthur I told him, and told him truly, that I was happy. In one letter he replied to me thus :

“ I feel sure that God is training you for something. I do not mean alone for dwelling with and serving Him in His eternal kingdom, but for some work, perhaps some special work for Him on earth. He has begun by teaching you patience, He has asked you to sit still, to bear a very monotonous irksome life, and you are doing this cheerfully, nay, you even tell me happily. Well was it for you, Dorothy, that in giving yourself to God, you made a full surrender. You put your earthly life, as well as your eternal, into His hands. Having done so you need neither have fear nor anxiety ; be sure your Father will do what is best for you.

“ But I would give you a word of counsel : do *not* be content in one way, think of the higher heights

you may reach, of the far nobler, and more Christ-like life you may yet attain. There is only one road to such a life, the road of prayer. Be much in prayer—it lifts the soul into a better atmosphere, not a doubt of this.

"I will also ask you to do something for your brother. Pray that I too may make a full surrender. There are many difficulties in my path just now, pray for me, that I may have a clear issue out of them. I look upon my profession as a holy one, as holy as that of a priest.

"I stand by dying beds, I can minister to dying souls. Pray for me that I may minister of Christ to these, and above all pray that I may live the Christ of whom I speak."

When I raised my eyes from the perusal of this letter, I found them full of tears, and for the first time observed that Miss Grant was watching me with something of personal interest.

"Child, why do you cry?"

"I suppose it was my brother's letter, ma'am, but they were glad tears."

"Glad tears! my dear, you are an enigma. Did your father shed glad tears when his work on the Greek Testament appeared? That was something

to cry for joy over, if you will : but a letter from a brother ! faugh ! ”

“ Well, Miss Grant, I shall expect to see tears in your eyes when your Commentary comes out ! ”

Miss Grant laughed and rubbed her hands.

“ Then you won’t, Doil ” (she always called me Doll). “ I only cry when I am in pain, I shall be glad enough that day. What a sensation I shall create ! my book will set at rest some sadly disquieting questions.”

I poured her out a cup of coffee.

“ Indeed, ma’am, will it soon be published ? ”

The momentary ray of brightness died out of the old lady’s face.

“ My dear, such a work is a life work, I never do expect to see that day. I shall leave the publication of my Commentary to John Grant.”

“ Who is he, ma’am ? ”

“ Don’t speak of him, I pray of you, Doll. I never mention his name, it makes Rebecca so furious. He lived here once for nearly a year, but Rebecca turned him out, she made his life unbearable—poor lad. I liked him very well.”

“ Is he a relation, Miss Grant ? ”

..

"Of course he is, child, he is the son of a cousin. He is about the only relation I have. I will tell you, Doll, why Rebecca hates the boy; she is jealous of him, she is afraid I will make him my heir."

"I should suppose she was certain of that, ma'am, people generally leave their money to their relations."

"So I say, my dear; at any rate, *she* shan't have it."

The old woman's grey face looked more cheerless than ever as she talked of her money. Suddenly she bent forward and laid her withered hand on my arm.

"How long have you been with me, Doll?"

"Nearly a year, Miss Grant."

"Child, I don't want to send you away, but I never expected you to remain with me."

"Why did you think that, ma'am."

"I believed Rebecca would turn you out."

I laughed.

"I assure you, Miss Grant, I had no idea of allowing her, though I confess to you, she has often made me uncomfortable."

"But you have been happy, on the whole?"

"Yes, I certainly have been happy."

"You are a puzzle to me, child. So young a girl ! So bright a girl ! happy in this house ; but it must be your learning."

"I am not at all learned, ma'am, and if I were, it would not make me happy."

"I believe you are right, my dear, for I am learned, there are few women more learned. I have given up my whole life to the pursuit of learning, and yet"—

She did not finish the sentence, but looked wistfully straight before her.

I thought for a moment, then, as my custom was, spoke to the point.

"Shall I tell you what makes me happy ?"

"Indeed, I wish you would."

"I can explain it better by saying *who* makes me happy—my dear Lord, Christ."

Miss Grant gazed steadily at me and a tinge of actual colour came into her sallow face.

"Keep your happiness, child, keep it," she said in a tremulous, husky voice. "I, too, am a religious woman ; God knows that, and He will put it down some day to the credit of Jane Grant. Now read me one of Plato's dialogues."



CHAPTER XII.

DING, DONG BELLI

"Gold ! gold ! gold !
Good or bad a thousand fold !
How widely its agencies vary—
To save—to ruin—to curse—to bless—
As even its minted coins express,
Now stamped with the image of good Queen Bess,
And now of a Bloody Mary."

MISS KILMANSEGG.

 NE evening when I had been about a year with Miss Grant, I happened for some trifling cause to invade Rebecca's premises.

It was past my usual hour for going to bed, but I had been busy over some long-neglected needle-work. As I stepped along the passage leading to the kitchen, I distinctly heard the clink of money; the door was unfastened, and entering, I saw the old woman standing by the table, a tin

box open before her, and several piles of sovereigns as well as some bank-notes by her side. She was busily reckoning the precious store, and neither saw nor heard me until I laid my hand on her shoulder.

"Rebecca, will you fill this jug with hot water?"

With a guilty start she turned round, her face grew deadly white, and two or three sovereigns she had in her hand fell out and rolled on the floor.

I picked them up and returned them to her. She took them in silence, and without a word filled my jug and handed it to me. Without a word either, I went away, but the look of hatred and fear the woman gave me haunted me all night.

Without doubt, Rebecca had other tastes beside Fielding and Smollett. I had long suspected this, but to-night's adventure had changed my suspicions into certainties.

Now Miss Grant had often told me that her father was well off, that he had left her well off. She had assured me that beyond a sum put by for books every year, she saved no money; and yet we lived as very poor people. Our meals were scanty, neither good in quality nor abundant in

quantity. I was a young and healthy girl, and I often got up hungry from a meagre and by no means comfortable dinner. Miss Grant never remarked these things, but of late from morning to night Rebecca had groaned over the expense of living, the dearness of provisions.

She openly lamented my enormous appetite, and once when compelled by hunger I had asked for more food, she had presented me with a mouldy crust, which, I regret to say, I so far lost my temper over as to fling back into her face.

Now Rebecca kept her mistress's purse, and to judge from what she did with it, it must have been a light purse indeed.

She gave us poor fires, wretched light, and Miss Grant had no new article of wearing apparel since I came to the house.

And now, to-night, I saw several piles of sovereigns on the kitchen table, though the woman had often said in my presence that she had hardly a penny to call her own. I felt much puzzled and distressed. What should I do?

I had never feared Rebecca, but she had given me a look to-night which might well daunt a braver heart than mine.

I got up and locked my door and then lay awake and thought. By the morning I had resolved to say nothing to Miss Grant, at least at first, but to speak very plainly to the servant herself.

It required courage to do this, and I confess I shrank from my task.

All things considered, my life was not too bright in this house; by the step I now contemplated I might make it unbearable: but what chance of happiness could I have, with the almost certainty that the old lady whose board I shared was being deliberately robbed?

After breakfast I resolved to go to Rebecca, but first I had a word to say to Miss Grant.

"Your father was a rich man, ma'am?"

"No, Doll, very far from that, but he left me enough of money."

"You don't seem to have enough of money, Miss Grant?"

"Well, child, I don't know; Rebecca does complain a good deal, but I have no more to give her."

"Miss Grant, I want to ask you a question, but I fear you will tell me it is a curious one."

Miss Grant smiled.

"All girls want curious questions answered, Doll ; ask away."

"Will you tell me exactly how much money you give Rebecca every year ?"

Miss Grant opened her eyes.

"My dear child, you *are* curious, but I don't mind you, Doll, you shall know. I give Rebecca £150 every half year. I keep £70 for myself, but out of that I pay your salary, Doll."

"Thank you, Miss Grant, I think you manage very well."

I put on my hat and went out. My first visit was to the butcher's, where Rebecca dealt.

"Will you tell me how much Miss Grant's bill for meat generally amounts to ?"

"From five to six shillings a week."

From shop to shop I went, getting a general idea of our expenditure. When I had summed up the items, I no longer wondered we were half-starved. We three lived within £1 a week. Rebecca had £300 a year to spend. Burning with indignation I descended to the kitchen.

"Rebecca, Miss Grant and I have been talking over money matters ; will you kindly show me your bills of expenditure for last week ?"

The woman's face grew white as ashes at my words. She tottered for a moment, then steadied herself, and tried to brave it out.

"Stay here, please, Miss Shirley, I am going up to find out what my mistress means by sending you to me on such an errand."

I placed myself between her and the door.

"Your mistress has sent me on no errand; I came of my own free will, for, Rebecca, *I have found you out.*"

The wretched woman, still trying to stifle all emotion, leant against the table where last night the golden money had betrayed her.

I stood with my back to the kitchen door and continued—

"Yes, Rebecca, you cannot hide the truth from me. I know all about it. Miss Grant gives you for the expenses of this house £300 a year. She has given you this sum for nearly three years, and during that time you have never once shown her an account of anything. I have been round to the different shops where you buy things, and you do not spend on our living £1 a week."

Rebecca was evidently convinced that I had

found her out. She sat down shaking in every limb, her face grey with terror.

My indignation, when I perceived what I took to be signs of penitence, cooled. I longed to do right, and yet to save her.

"It depends on yourself whether I lay this matter before your mistress, but you must account to me for the missing money."

Rebecca covered her face.

"You have stolen this money," I went on; "you cannot deny it. At first I felt very angry with you, but now I pity you. I don't know whether I am doing right or wrong, but if you will confess all, I will try to save you."

During this speech, Rebecca had raised her head; she spoke now in a fawning tone.

"You won't send me to prison, young miss; you will remember my grey hairs."

"How much money have you stolen?"

"Well, I have—I have £200."

"You have a great deal more than that."

"Miss Shirley, I solemnly declare I have no more; one little £200, and she never missed it, will never want it, and it will keep me from the workhouse. Let me keep it, kind, Christian miss."

"How much more have you stolen?"

Rebecca was driven to bay.

"How dare you?" she began.

I took the hand she had half raised to strike me.

"Rebecca, don't try to resist me; I began to pity you, and would wish to save you. Remember you are in my power, and I can send you to prison."

In my excitement I never noticed that the woman was dragging me round the kitchen.

"Does my mistress know?" she asked.

"I have not told her, but"—

My words were arrested. Passing her powerful left arm (she was a gigantic woman) round my waist, she opened the door of a dark cellar, pulled me through into another beyond; from this, into an old wine vault, where, flinging me roughly on the floor, she locked me in before I could make the least resistance.

"Who is in my power now?" she said with a mocking laugh, and I heard her footsteps hurrying off, locking the other doors on her way.

I was fairly trapped, and at first felt almost inclined to laugh too, but my short-lived merriment

ment was quickly changed to perplexity and alarm.

Rebecca had locked me into a cellar so far apart from the rest of the house, or at least from that portion inhabited by Miss Grant, that by no possible means could I make myself heard. There was no use shouting for aid, my cries would reach no ears that would render me assistance. I sat down on an old broken bench which stood near the wall, and tried to realise my position.

In no light could I make it appear a pleasant one. I was truly in Rebecca's power, and I felt that she was angry enough to do me real harm just then. Why had I interferred? Why try to brave this bad woman? But I could not be sorry for this. Of course, to take such a step to disclose a long system of robbery, was a difficult business, and one full of risk to myself.

"I am suffering for it now," I said, "but that is of little consequence if that wretched woman's guilty course is arrested, and poor Miss Grant rescued from her power. I don't think God will allow her to injure me; in one sense, I am certain God will take care of me."

Faintly and in the far distance I heard sounds, it was Rebecca moving about the kitchen. In a short time they ceased, and all became intensely still. It was also intensely dark, not a ray of light penetrated through any chink in the old wine cellar.

In Charles Reade's book, "Never Too Late to Mend," he gives a vivid and terrible account of the feelings of those immured in a dark cell.

"The man shivered in the thick, black air that seemed a fluid, not an atmosphere.

"When the door closed, his heart was yet beating with rage and wild desire of vengeance.

"He nursed this rage as long as he could, but the thick darkness soon cooled and cowed him. The blackness seemed to smother him. He lay down and tried to sleep. Sleep would not come so sought; and now his spirits were quite cowed. He listened at the door; he rapped; no one came. He put his ear to the ground and listened; no sound—blackness, silence, solitude. Fear came upon him and trembling, and a cold sweat bedewed his limbs." And the noble-minded

chaplain in the story, who went into the cell to try what this awful punishment was like, thus speaks of it :

"I assure you it tried my nerves to the uttermost The minutes seemed hours, leaden hours, and they weighed my head down and my heart down."

I was a brave girl, but my nerves, over-excited as they were by last night's adventure and this morning's work, began now to succumb to fear. I confess that when I had been what seemed like two or three hours in this darkness, I began to shake. Like Mr. Eden, I tried every means of calming my disturbed feelings ; like him, I had the consciousness of right to support me, and like him, I was fortified by communion with my omnipresent God ; but, alas ! unlike this good man, I had no hope of being let out at the end of any six or eight hours. What did Rebecca mean to do with me ?

I began to grow seriously afraid.

It must be dinner-time now, and Miss Grant would wonder at my absence, but Rebecca would give her a plausible excuse. No hope of rescue from that quarter.

I strained my ears to hear the servant taking up the dinner things, but there was no sound whatever. The intense silence and intense darkness hemmed me in, and chilled me in body and soul.

How slowly the leaden hours crawled by! It must be evening now,—now, it must be night. There was no use disguising the fact from myself any longer, I became horribly afraid. But now my fear roused me to action.

How foolish to sit still; there might be a way out of this place. I groped round with my hands. Alas! there was only one door, that by which I had entered: but close to this door was, I knew by its feel, a step-ladder. Why was it there? Stored away, probably, as so much valueless rubbish. I would make use of it now in feeling the walls and roof of my prison. I did so, and at last discovered a trap-door. Could this avail me? Could this furnish a mode of exit? It was unfastened—it moved back at my touch, and the faint light that comes through long-closed shutters greeted me. I could see now, and with sight my worst fears vanished.

I pushed my head through the trap-door and

looked about me. As well as I could observe anything in the dim light, the room above me was large, unused for years, doubtless, securely locked up. I might not, I probably should not, be able to leave it, but it was at any rate a better place to be in than the wine-cellar. I heard the ticking of a disturbed spider, and the nibbling of a mouse in the distance. The twilight, and the sound of any creature, was welcome, was delicious! I scrambled and struggled, and at last, amidst a cloud of dust and dirt, and the rage of annoyed insects, got myself into the room.

The time was winter, and the faint light here was passing into profound darkness, nearly as great as what I had left.

I groped my way to the door. It was firmly locked and the key removed. I tried the large window, shutters were drawn across it, and fastened by rusty iron bars which no strength of mine could move.

Suddenly I stumbled upon a chair, then against a table; the room was not wholly without furniture. I groped a little further, and my hand came in contact with something solid, something larger than any chair or table. It was a bedstead—a

four-post bedstead with a bed on it, and mouldy curtains hanging down all round. I had come into a half-dismantled bedroom, and instantly I knew where I was, and knew also that I could escape. I had got in this remarkable way into the haunted room of the house, into the bedroom of Miss Grant's old father. I was sitting on the bed where he had died.

For many years Miss Grant had avoided this chamber; she said it made her melancholy. Rebecca had never visited it in her life; she declared that the old man's ghost dwelt there.

But as I rested against the old bedstead, no supernatural fears troubled me, but a memory came back to my mind which told me I could escape. The memory was this:—

In the long evenings we had spent together, Miss Grant had related to me every scrap of her history, and in particular had given me all the tedious details of the tanyard by means of which her father had made his money. I was really quite acquainted with the business, and should not have done badly in it myself.

One of her strongest reminiscences was a fire, a dreadful fire, which had nearly ruined them.

Immediately after the fire her father had purchased, or ordered to be made, a bell, a very large and powerful bell, which when sounded could be heard by every individual on the premises.

This bell was hung in the tanyard, but the old man had a wire communicating with it into his own bedroom ; nay, more, into his own bedstead. At the nearest approach of any danger he could sound an alarm which would bring all his servants to his assistance. Never since his death had that bell been rung, but doubtless the communicating wire was still there.

I climbed on the bed and felt for it. A cloud of moths beat against my face, and the mouldy smell oppressed me, but I found what I sought.

About a foot above the pillow on which the old man's head had so often rested was a handle and a bell-rope. I clasped the handle—I seized the rope ; but I paused before I rang.

Had this great bell ever been of any use to old Jonathan Grant ? had it ever saved him from danger ? or had he a presentiment, as he ordered it to be made, as he watched its casting, as with pride he saw it hung in its place, as at night he

lay on his pillow and looked at the little handle which connected itself with this great thing, that he had done all this for me, that the bell, silent for so many years, would give out its tone now, loud, sure, clear, to deliver me from my prison? I pulled the bell-rope violently.

Oh, delightful sound! The clanging without almost deafened me.

I waited for a moment, listening eagerly, then peeled forth my summons more imperiously than before.

Now, there was noise in the passage, the hurrying sound of eager feet; the rusty lock was drawn back; and looked in, not Rebecca, but Miss Grant herself, pale and trembling. By her side stood a man, who, holding a light, waved it frantically about, searching in vain for me, seated on the bed, my hand still on the bell-rope.

"Why, John Grant, 'tis Doll, 'tis my dear Doll," cried Miss Jane.

I ran to her, and, shall I confess it? threw my arms round the old lady's neck and burst into tears.

"My dear, my love, you are cold, you are trembling. What is the matter? How ever did you get here?"

"Do not ask her at present, cousin ; she will tell you by and by," interferred Mr. Grant. "Come, young lady."

And taking my hand, Miss Jane following, we went back to the familiar little study. Then, when I had rested for a moment, I narrated my adventures to my astonished auditors. But when I had finished my tale, I found I had something to learn as well as to tell. Rebecca had disappeared.

"Yes, Doll, I will relate to you the story. I waited and watched for you all the morning, and I confess I got cross and angry. About twelve o'clock some one rang the hall-door bell ; I thought it was you, and went to let you in, meaning to scold you well, for not one line of Plato could I get on with, owing to your absence. When, who should I see but my dear boy,—he has grown greatly, and is vastly improved,—eh ! Doll."

Now, John Grant was a plain man, he was not a young man, his days for growing must have gone by for many years, and also I had never seen him before. He looked comical, however, and bent forward with a smile.

"Eh ! Miss Doll, answer my cousin's question."

"You have grown immensely, sir, and have vastly improved," I responded gravely.

"Proceed, cousin Jane," said Mr. Grant, leaning back in his chair, "Miss Dorothy agrees with you."

"Does she, John? she generally has a will of her own. But where was I? Oh yes, my dear boy came in here, Doll, and we talked for some time, until at last it came to be the dinner hour, and neither you nor Rebecca had put in an appearance. You know I feared that woman, so I sent John down to the kitchen. She was not there, no dinner was ready. We did not know what to think. In short, we had a day of it, and when that great bell sounded from the old tanyard, I thought—no, I did *not* think of my father's ghost, Doll, but I felt that the end of the world had come."

"Where did you suppose I was spending my day, Miss Grant?"

"Child, you know I never suppose, it takes my mind from my Commentary. I was agitated enough at your not appearing, without supposing. How *could* I guess where you were, Doll? I said to John, I know nothing about either of them,

I have not the slightest clue to the absence of either of them. They are away and they ought to be here, but as to forcing my mind from its accustomed train of thought, to find a clue to this fact, that I cannot, and will not do."

The old lady's appearance rather denied her words. Her spectacles were pushed up on her forehead, her cap was on one side, she looked even still intensely anxious.

"She spent her day conjecturing," whispered Mr. Grant in my ear.

I laughed.

"Had either of you any dinner?"

"Oh yes, Doll, John made some coffee."

"I am going to make some for you now," said the gentleman. "There! you are not to stir," as I attempted to remonstrate. "I know where to find everything. Talk to my cousin, until I return."

"Don't oppose him," said Miss Jane, "he is in the medical profession."

I smiled, but this time rather faintly, for the reaction of all I had gone through was making itself felt in thorough exhaustion. In a quarter of

an hour Mr. Grant reappeared, bearing in triumph a tray with fragrant coffee, toast, and some dainty slices of fried ham.

"This is for Miss Doll, cousin," he said, putting the tray before me, "but as you and I also are hungry, I am going now in search of something for ourselves."

"Wait for ten minutes," I said, "I don't suppose either of you are quite starving. I will get you something then."

Mr. Grant sat down by my side.

"Has my cousin told you what I am?"

"Yes, you are Mr. Grant."

"I mean my profession, child."

"She said I was not to oppose you, that you are in the medical profession."

"You had better not oppose me, I could cut off your leg in the most scientific manner possible, also your arm. I am not going to do either, but I intend giving you a prescription."

"What is it?"

"Here is the first half—stay quiet—eat your supper—make yourself comfortable—don't worry. The other half I will give to you by and by."

"Why not now?"

"In the first place, you are not ready for it; in the next, I have other things to do. Miss Grant and I are a little hungry, and I have also to go to the police station to give an account of that miserable woman."

"Oh!"

The allusion to Rebecca silenced me, and renewed the shivering sensation which light, warmth, and food were beginning to subdue.

Mr. Grant, after gazing at me for a moment with professional gravity, poured out another cup of coffee, heaped some more ham on my plate, and bidding me make a good meal, went out.

I obeyed him, for I was really starving. Miss Jane went to sleep by the fire, and I, when I had finished my supper, sat by her side, feeling at last peaceful and comfortable. When my doctor returned, he saw that his prescription had taken good effect.

"What! all the ham and toast and coffee gone! that is right. Let me feel your pulse."

I gave him my hand.

"No more shivering, eh?"

"No!"

"You made a good supper?"

"I *was* so hungry!"

"Of course you were. Here is the second half!" and he pulled a letter out of his pocket.

It was directed in my brother's writing.

"From Arthur!" I exclaimed in astonishment.

"He gave it to me this morning."

"Do you know Arthur, Mr. Grant?"

"Of course I do, I have known him for years!"

"Oh!" I said, too astonished even to open my letter.

"Read what he says, it concerns you and me!"

"What *do* you mean?"

"The letter will tell you!"

I broke the seal, and was soon lost to external things in the contents.

Those contents were as follows—

"MY DEAR DOROTHY,—The time has come when you may, if you choose, change your life of seclusion and inactivity for one of great usefulness. I want you here, can you come to me? I want you at once, can you come to me at once?"

"I no longer want your salary, my child, but I sadly want you. I will tell you why.

"Last week, my connection with St. Benedict's Hospital ceased. My friends give out that I resigned; in truth, I was dismissed.

"There is no dishonour in this, Dorothy.

"I pursued a course which I thought right, but which I knew insured dismissal.

"What I felt would happen, *has* happened.

"Do not question me about it, it is a long and painful story; I may tell it you some day. I have just entered into partnership with the gentleman who brings you this letter. Our practice is in the East End. There is a house which goes with the practice, where my partner and I shall live. Will you come and be mistress of *my* half? Will you join in the great work going on in this part of London?

"Do not say you are unfit for this; you have willing hands and a willing heart, and God wants all such here.

"My friend will spend a week in your neighbourhood. If you say yes, you can come to town under his escort.—Your affectionate brother,

"ARTHUR SHIRLEY."

I raised my surprised and delighted eyes to Mr. Grant's face.

"Who will you think most of to-night—Rebecca or Arthur?"

"Arthur!" I said.

"Then go to bed, and dream of him."





CHAPTER XIII.

OLD TIMES COME AGAIN NO MORE.

"He shall be a light, a life, a faith, a hope, a presence."—*Analysis* of "*In Memoriam*," by REV. F. W. ROBERTSON.

MADE up my mind that night. Before I lay down I wrote my answer. It took an hour to think about, two minutes to write.

"DEAR BROTHER, Dorothy will come to you."
I sealed it up and directed it, then went and sat by the window.

I had gone through an exciting, trying day, nevertheless midnight did not see me in bed. I no longer needed sleep, my new joy and hope had banished all sense of fatigue. Not until now did I really know how much I had longed for during these past twelve months, not until now did I even begin to guess how much I loved Arthur.

In my personal pleasure, I dwelt but slightly on a part of his letter, which otherwise must have troubled me, namely, his dismissal from St. Benedict's Hospital.

In this affair he had gone through some distress, some pain. Well! I could comfort him. When I at last went to sleep, my dreams were rainbow tinted. But I had a difficulty—I found it very hard to tell Miss Grant.

Since my adventure with Rebecca the old lady seemed really fond of me: she was nervous too, and clung to me.

"I don't want her back, Doll," she would say, speaking of Rebecca; "I will own to you I was afraid of her. Let her keep the money; I don't care about the police finding her."

Nor did the police find Rebecca; she was in secure hiding somewhere, they could get no trace of her whereabouts.

"You and I will get another servant and be very happy, and you shall manage my money, Doll."

I could not bear this, I rushed away to find the doctor.

"You must tell her," I said, "I *cannot*."

"Of course, I will tell her," replied Mr. Grant, and he went into the room, shutting the door behind him.

After a long time he came out.

"Go in and speak to my cousin, Miss Doll; she has a proposal to make to you."

I found Miss Jane standing by the table. The dear, old thing came up to me, and put her withered arms round my neck.

"I won't part from you, Doll, my own bright, clever Doll."

I found tears in my eyes.

"Dear Miss Grant, I am very sorry, but"—

"Fiddlestick, child! Of course you are glad. The old woman is sorry, but not the child, that is only fair. But I tell you, Doll, I don't mean to part from you."

"How can you manage that, ma'am?"

"I am coming to London, too."

"Miss Grant!"

"Yes, Doll; John will give me a room in his part of the house. I will live with him, and you shall come and read to me for one hour daily, and I will pay your salary the same as ever."

"But, Miss Grant, dear Miss Grant, you said you loved this place, that you would die here."

"No, Doll, I have changed my mind, I will die here," and she laid her grey head for an instant on my shoulder.

It was the strangest thing, but it all happened. The house in Beer Lane was advertised to let, the furniture to be sold, and Miss Jane and I were still to live under one roof. When, at the end of a week, Mr. Grant returned to London, he brought us with him. I think my old friend must have been remembered for a time, even at London Bridge, as the shabbily-dressed old lady with all the luggage. She had ten gigantic boxes, three of which contained her notes and MSS. on the great Commentary, the other seven her books. Her wardrobe fitted into a small hand-bag. I am rather afraid Arthur groaned when he saw them and her.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS.

"Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones gone
For ever and ever by—
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
Who can rule and dare not lie.

—TENNYSON.

 RUSH of old associations met me on the threshold of my new life, they thronged round me on the platform at London Bridge in the shape of Arthur, Ruth, Mabel, and Lucy.

I had seen little of my family for twelve months; I had purposely stayed away from them. Celchester was endurable when not compared with Dulwich; the less, for my happiness, I thought of Dulwich the better.

Now all this was over. I could cling with delight to my beautiful twin sisters, I could return the warm pressure of Ruth's little hand, I could look into my dear Arthur's face, and feel that to be his daily companion was my future happy lot in life.

We four girls were bundled into a cab, Mr. and Miss Grant followed in another, Arthur came home by rail. We drove along the well-lighted streets chatting and laughing—our hearts, our voices, our faces, as bright as happiness and youth could make them.

"Isn't it nice to see our dear, funny, old country Dolly again?"

"Dolly, I am off to Russia in a fortnight."

"I am to leave school at Christmas."

"Dolly, dear, Miss Grant *is* an old horror."

"Why don't you ask for mother, Dolly?"

"And for Aunt Hannah, Dolly?"

"Here we are, dears," said Ruth's quiet voice.

We had arrived. Arthur was before us, and now stood on the steps to welcome us.

But before he could come forward, the cab door was flung open by a boy who had been

leaning against a lamp-post, and who darted forward for the purpose.

He was the first City Arab I had seen, and I must pause even on the threshold of my future home to describe him. A little fellow, apparently about nine or ten years of age, literally dressed in rags, and covered from head to foot with street gutter and dirt, but through the rags and dirt I discerned a well-grown finely-made boy, with a certain jaunty gait, that spoke him full of spirits. He had blue eyes and crisp, curling, yellow hair; and when he looked up at Arthur, his fair face broke into a smile which made him look radiant.

"Is that you, Captain Jack?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't forget the night-school at eight o'clock," said Arthur, touching the lad's ragged jacket.

"I can't, then, guv—sir," he corrected himself.
"I is arter another lay to-night."

"Well, my boy, come to the school at eight. I want to speak to you, I won't keep you."

"Honour bright?" dubiously questioned the boy.

"Honour bright," replied Arthur.

The sunshine again broke over the little lad's expressive features, he smiled confidently, and then vanished.

We entered the house, and then in Arthur's face came the first damp to my joy. My brother's face was changed. He stood in the bright gaslight, welcoming me, joining in our mirth, but revealing very strongly to my anxious eyes an alteration.

I had not seen him for twelve months. I was distressed and startled, more particularly as I could not tell where the change lay.

He was neither thin nor very pale, his bodily health seemed perfect, his smile was as kindly as ever, his eyes looked at you with just the old mixture of truth and love,—yet he was changed, utterly and sadly.

And here let me pause to say a word.

In treading the road God has marked out for me to walk in, I have passed by some funerals. Perhaps people will say that in my story there is too much of death, but do not all our lives lead to death. What woman of thirty has much left of her childhood's home?

Ten years ago I knew a family who seemed

to me more closely united by the ties of love, the claims of kindred, and the bonds of a happy home, than any family I ever met.

The children were bright, sparkling with fun, each of them marked by a strong individuality. From their earliest years they were surrounded by religious influences. Their parents were both religious, their mother pre-eminently so.

She was a singularly noble woman, a little stern perhaps to strangers, but in her tender, loving, unselfish heart, her children could safely trust. They lived secure, fearing no evil. The children knew nothing of any life outside their little fold ; they were happy in each other, and the unknown future was replete to them with glorious possibilities. All strangers singled out two of the group for special admiration.

One was a truly gallant lad destined for the army. He had a voice like a lark, a whistle that penetrated everywhere, eyes sparkling with mirth, a smile that was radiant. He was the ringleader in every frolic, the cleverest, the wittiest of all that bright group ; his nature was ardent, almost too tender and loving. Now and then his mother trembled, fearing the temptations such a disposi-

tion would meet with, the chill such a warm heart would receive in the cold world.

The other was a gentle boy, a perfect contrast to his brother. He did not possess his brilliant talents, nor his singular power of pleasing; but he had a silent fun of his own, and few could withstand the roguish light in those sweet eyes, shaded by their long, black lashes.

I think among those children he was the peacemaker, ever seeking the good of others, never thinking of himself.

His influence was silent and unobtrusive, noticed most when gone.

Ten years have passed, and where are they all?

Go to a certain churchyard in a quiet country village; that gifted lad and his gentle brother lie there. Those who feared for their future need not have been greatly troubled, the Good Shepherd has long since gathered these lambs into the heavenly fold. Look a little higher on that gravestone, the mother's name is also there; her work, which was often hard and laborious, which of late years was fraught with many sorrows and anxieties, is over, and she also is at rest.

Where are the others? Some in distant lands,

some married, some struggling in the battle of life, learning in a temporal sense the meaning of that prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread."

"*All are scattered now and fled.*"

The house they were born in knows them no more.

- I have met such a case, how many of my readers have met similar ones?

But in Arthur, the change I saw bore no resemblance to decay. In body, soul, and spirit, he appeared to me in health, and well ; yet his face had sustained a loss, or what I took that evening for such ; I read it now, aright, as the beginning of gain.

We had a happy time together, and it was late before Ruth and I retired to the room we were to share between us.

My sisters were to leave on the morrow, Lucy and Mabel returning to school, Ruth to Dulwich.

I questioned Ruth about Mabel.

"Is she really going to Russia ?"

"Yes, is it not nice ? she has got a situation as governess in a nobleman's family in St. Peterburgh."

"And Lucy ?"

"Lucy has developed quite a talent for art.

After a time Arthur hopes to apprentice her to a wood engraver."

"Dear Ruth, what for?"

"To teach her an honourable trade, by which she may earn her living. Lucy aspires to illustrating books."

"How is mother, Ruth?"

"Only anxious to see you. You are to come to us for a day or two next week."

"And Aunt Hannah?"

"Ah! you naughty Dolly! you don't care to know about her. Let me tell you, however, that she is very well, and far more agreeable than of yore."

"Is that because I am away?"

"Perhaps so. She has, however, a district, and works for the female education in the East."

"And yourself, dear Ruth?"

"Oh, I am always the same, just your happy old Ruth."

"Quite happy, dear?" looking into her peaceful eyes as I spoke.

"Yes, my dear, perfectly and truly happy."

Just before I went to sleep I asked my sister one question more—

"Why did Arthur leave St. Benedict's Hospital?"

"I do not quite know—something about out-patients. Dorothy!"

"Well?"

"You must make his home bright for him."

"Indeed, I mean to try."

"That is your work, Dolly, take it up thankfully and rejoicingly; you are called by God to aid one whose whole life is a consecration."

Ruth went to sleep, and so did I when I had prayed that I might follow in Arthur's steps.

Yet there was a change in Arthur.





CHAPTER 'CV.

THREE SOULS.

"Princes' parks and merchants' homes,
Tents for soldiers, ships for seamen,
Ay, but ruins worse than Rome's
In your pauper men and women."

MRS. BROWNING.

me to discriminate between true and false charity ;
and child as I was at his death, I could already
discern between the deserving and undeserving
objects of benevolence in our neighbourhood.

Being accustomed to the poor on a small scale,
I came now to deal with them in the great world
east of the city of London ; where, as a recent

writer says, "everybody, man, woman, and child, is a worker." I found myself in the midst of this vast new world at a time when poverty and distress would most strike an unaccustomed eye, for I came to London in the winter.

London cold is different from country cold. In the country the snow falls pure and white ; it may freeze, but the place looks fresh, bright, and beautiful. But in London the cold is essentially ugly ; there are black puddles, miry streets, dirt everywhere. The people who hurry by have blue faces, the children are crying, the horses slipping, cabs pass you at funeral speed, omnibuses crawl along, fog and darkness mingle with the falling snow, and then—*God help the poor.*

I had been with Arthur for nearly a month, and all this time had contented myself with making the house comfortable, with reading to Miss Grant and trying to reconcile her to London ; but as yet had sought no out-door work, beyond teaching a class of rather unruly boys on Sunday. I had taught these boys once, and had failed to keep them in order. This astonished and disheartened me. I had always prided myself on being a good teacher, but here my choicest stories

seemed to make no impression. When I told Arthur, he was not surprised.

"You are doing quite as well as I could expect, Dorothy. Your boys were noisy, but I don't think any of them walked out of the room."

"Dear Arthur, *would* they?"

* "When I first took a class here, only one boy out of twelve stayed out the hour."

"Did you ever go again?"

"Yes; I thought a great deal of having gained this boy. In six months' time I had my twelve as mute as lambs, and what is more, willing to do almost anything I asked them."

"How did you manage, Arthur?"

"Well, I believe I prayed a good deal about them, and I showed them very plainly that I loved them."

"You *loved* them?" I said.

"Yes; and let me tell you, you will never win a soul out of these wilds by any other means."

I was startled. Here was undoubtedly the principle of religion, and in it I found myself sadly deficient.

I loved Christ, I thought truly I loved Christ, but now I must love all men for Christ's sake.

Now I had it in me to love deeply and well, but I could not love easily. With me, love followed ever on respect and esteem, but what was there in that boy with his shaggy red hair, in that other lad covered with dirt, in that great overgrown youth with his low repulsive physiognomy, over whose features vice and cunning were spread like a thick veil, to inspire any such feeling? and yet . . . a verse from the Bible came to my remembrance:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

What was the mind of Christ? Love all love. While we were yet sinners, dead in trespasses and sins. How ugly was our moral nature; how repulsive to those holy eyes, too pure to look upon sin: yet He loved us. That night my prayer was a simple, though a very fervent one. "God, give me something of the mind of Christ; when I go among those people give me something of the spirit of Christ."

I was praying then for the secret, the one secret of success in dealing with the poor.

The next morning a young lady, whose acquaintance I had made at the Ragged School, called and asked me to go with her on a flower mission.

"We take round flowers to thirty of the London hospitals every week," she said. "The flowers are all sent to The Home of Industry conducted by Miss Macpherson in Commercial Street, where we tie them up and attach a verse of Scripture to each. Will you come and help us?"

I went gladly. Although it was winter, several large hampers of flowers had arrived, and about twenty ladies arranged them in pretty bunches for distribution. This work was followed by a prayer-meeting, in which any one who wished could join. Several ladies prayed, somewhat to my surprise, aloud. I never cared for extempore prayer, but found myself compelled to listen to these. One element was remarkable in their supplications—faith. These people evidently expected a blessing on their work, they expected these texts to suit the needs of those to whom they were given, these flowers to speak of their Maker. When the prayer-meeting was over, we divided into parties of four, and set out. To-day

I found myself at a large East End workhouse infirmary.

"When you give the flowers, say a few suitable words," whispered my companion as we entered the men's wards.

I promised readily, thinking little in my inexperience of the difficulties of my task. Here I was now, face to face with poverty, disease, death. Rows of narrow beds, each bed with an occupant, met my eye. I hardly knew when I entered what I expected to see; certainly not this. But I cannot describe it all; let three cases suffice.

In one bed lay a man with a peculiar face, striking and full of character. I had given flowers to several who smiled at my approach, and took the little gift with a grateful "Thank you."

Not so this individual.

He was a man of gigantic frame, and as I came near him, I saw that in some way his chest had been shattered. His dark eyes looked out through two caves, luminous and gloomy. He received my offering without a smile and in silence; the text attached to his flowers was, "All things work together for good."

Somewhat I *could* preach no sermon here. From his deeper experience, from the pedestal of his great suffering (for there were beads of anguish on his forehead), this man would have spurned my simple words. With such a case I felt myself unfit to deal. I must, however, say something, and asked him if he had met with an accident.

"Yes, a fortnight ago, a heap of earth fell on me; I was nearly buried alive. My ankle bone was broken, and my chest all smashed up."

He gave these details in a dry, hard manner, neither expecting, nor wishing for pity. I said a few words of very commonplace condolence, and then passed on. When I left, the man closed his eyes with a sigh of relief. In the next ward, the first object on which my eyes rested was a figure seated upright in bed. A *human* figure, and I say this word advisedly; for those wild, burning, suffering eyes seemed more to belong to a wounded animal. The body was that of a literal skeleton. This creature was beyond speech; the emaciated hands could hardly retain the flowers I offered. A man, evidently

a visitor, was seated by the bedside, who glanced at me and shook his head. Here I could give tears, but my words, my words of comfort, where were *they*? Some one altogether different, some one who *can* speak must minister here, I thought as I turned away.

In the third bed lay a pretty boy of nine or ten years of age, his mother sat by his side. He lay contented and smiling, apparently not very ill.

"I have lost eight, and he is my last," explained the woman.

I had no flowers left, but offered a picture book, which he received with delight. Here I *might* speak, but I stood by in silence.

Then my companion came up and bending over the child said something about Jesus; the eyes were lighted up, the little fingers clasped themselves round hers, the boy's whole face grew bright.

I turned away sick at heart, afraid, ashamed.

When I next visited that hospital, those three beds had other occupants; those three souls, to whom I brought no message, were with God.



CHAPTER XVI.

GOOD AND BAD SAMARITANS.

" Much must be borne which it is hard to bear ;
Much given away which it were sweet to keep.
God help us all ! who need, indeed, His care.
And yet, I know, the Shepherd loves His sheep."

OWEN MEREDITH.

 Y first failure did not, however, greatly dishearten me. I continued my prayer, I looked and waited for an answer, and this answer, sent by Him who says : " Ask, and ye shall receive," was in the end abundantly given to me.

I now took up my life with zest, and found in it, at least at first, a delicious sense of freshness and novelty. I lived in a part where any dress sufficed, where conventionalities were unheeded. Walking alone among these crowds I felt more free and unfettered than I ever did in the lanes

and fields at home. I confess I did not like solitude, I enjoyed contact with my fellow-creatures.

If I could not speak to them, I might look at them, might feel them passing by; I was never lonely in the crowd. If occasion offered I was sure that some among my fellow-men would come to my aid. I never lost my way, but some one, *not* always a policeman, put me right.

One day near the Bank I saw a girl fall; immediately two or three strangers rushed to her aid, she was kindly helped and anxiously inquired after. Oh, there was much of good among my fellow-men!

My time was now greatly occupied. I had Arthur's house to see after, and every morning I devoted two or three hours to Miss Grant.

Then, too, by slow degrees I began to find my work, the work to which I have since devoted my life. I began to understand the poor. In acquiring this knowledge I had many difficulties to encounter, and, shall I confess it? many failures to record.

Arthur, although such a short time in the East, was I found already at the head of one or two

charitable organisations ; as his sister, therefore, much fell to my share. I had soup and coal tickets to give away, and alms of many kinds to dispense. A certain power was vested in me, and to use this well, much discernment was required. I must not pauperise, I must distinguish between the deserving and the undeserving. How many times had I to learn by my failures !

I had a plan which I considered excellent. I made poor clothes which I sold for a small sum. The people were quite ready to buy. I engaged to provide twelve poor widows. They bought warm winter cloaks and other comfortable garments for a trifling cost. Here I was not giving charity, nor encouraging a pauper spirit. How well clad and warm were my poor people !

One day, when returning home, I met one of them. She had not her accustomed smile and curtsey, *neither* had she her comfortable cloak to protect her from the fast falling snow. She endeavoured to pass me unobserved, but I stopped her to inquire its fate. She had lent it to her daughter. I believed her, and went on. At home I told Arthur of the incident, rather extolling the woman's good-nature.

My brother smiled and made no remark ; but the next day he took me past a certain pawn-broker's, into which he made me look.

There, with a number of other similiar articles, hung my well-remembered cloak.

"I fear, Dorothy, too many of your comfortable garments are to be found here."

"But they *bought* them, Arthur ; they could make nothing by selling them again."

"You sold them cheap ; they probably gained twopence or threepence on each article."

This on inquiry I found to be but too common a practice, and I believe I sold few more warm cloaks.

But by degrees, slowly but surely, with Arthur's help, by the aid of prayer and the strength of faith, I began, as I said, to find my work.

But my brother was still an enigma to me. Apart from his practice as doctor, perhaps I ought rather to say through and in his practice, he was endeavouring to evangelise these waste-places.

The clergymen of our parish, recognising an earnest man in their midst, had thankfully claimed his services. He laboured from morning to night.

Nor indeed would this give a fair idea of his

work. While others slept Arthur knelt by dying beds; he went down truly into the dark places of the earth and rescued dying souls, pointing to them immortal hope.

He lived, as many other noble men in his profession live, unnoticed, unknown, unpaid, labouring for the pure love of God and men.

• Still my brother, once so joyful in his faith, was unhappy. This puzzled me sorely.

One day I asked him if he looked for results to his work.

His reply was not so bright as it would have been a year ago.

"Dorothy, the day will reveal it ; but it seems to me that the bravest man's work here must be as a drop in the ocean ; the evil around is so mighty, the social wrongs so mighty, the poverty and misery so mighty. Do you know that in this parish there are over fifteen thousand souls ? What can a handful of men do here ? "

"If they have faith," I said.

Arthur's pale face lighted up at my words.

"Ah ! my child, you do right to reproach me ; but in truth I often feel unworthy of this great work."

"I know no man more fitted," I said.

"Hush, my dear, you know nothing of my fitness. I am unfit, but so I believe would any other man be. The fact is, Dorothy, owing to the radical wrongs, the social evils which cry loudly for reform, the work of evangelisation is reduced to the veriest minimum. Of the Church of England there are, I believe, four clergymen here. Of course there are ministers, one or two, of other denominations; there are also Scripture readers and Bible-women. As such things go, the parish we live in is well provided for. Do you think we reach a tenth of the people? Impossible! But if there were a thousand earnest Christian men ready to take up this work, they could do but little; pioneers must go before."

"What are the pioneers, Arthur?"

"My dear, wiser heads than mine have been puzzled, and are still puzzled, to make out this problem. Of course every one says the main thing is to get the poor to help themselves. Undoubtedly; but to do this the whole system of charity must be changed. The fact is, our charities make our paupers. Have you ever remarked how poorly clad and miserable the crossing-sweepers are?"

"Yes, indeed ; there is a girl who has a crossing by B—— Street. I never look at her without shivering."

"I know a little about that girl, Dorothy ; I believe her to be, for her class, a well-principled and hard-working child. Some time ago a friend of mine took pity on her, and gave her a suit of tough, but warm and respectable clothes. The girl was delighted, and the next morning went in high spirits and comfortably attired to her work. What was my friend's astonishment to see her two days later shivering in the old rags. Somewhat indignantly she inquired the reason. 'I should have starved had I worn them, ma'am,' was the reply. 'People would give me nothing. They said it was a shame for such a well-dressed girl to have anything to say to my calling.' Such is a fact—the people must keep *up* the appearance of poverty, they must on no account look respectable if they wish to get any aid from charity. That child you gave sixpence to yesterday did in all probability not want it, she possibly had several shillings in her pocket ; whereas, the little girl in the clean frock and hat who stood by and would not have *touched* your money, was half starving."

"This is dreadful," I said; "but ought not the clergymen, the ministers of every denomination, to look into, and as far as they can, prevent these things."

"As far as they can, they do. But as I said just now, consider their numbers compared with the vast army they have to contend against. Never were there so many Scripture readers, Bible women, missionaries of all descriptions as now; but were there ten times as many they could only reach the *surface* of the masses. Besides, Dorothy, our measure of success is in proportion as we follow our Divine Lord; and I have seen these men, I have often seen them with their eyes full of love and their whole lives burning with holy zeal, yet signally and completely fail from their sheer inability to do this."

"How is that?" I asked.

"Look to the Gospels and you will see; look to one page in the Life of Christ and you will see. We are willing enough to preach the Word to the five thousand, but we forget the seven loaves and two fishes." My brother paused, then continued in a tone of suppressed excite-

ment, "Before as a *body*,—I do not say there are not exceptions,—but before as a body these people who press around us will listen to and believe in the religion of Christ, they must be raised socially and morally, they must be fed, at least, *as well* as the beasts, and not lodged a great deal worse; in short, they must have the whole gospel as Christ preached it, not the half, which man, when he tries at all, often puts them off with."

"But, Arthur, do you disapprove of charity?"

"I would have true charity, Dorothy, not that miserable spirit that only panders to its own self-righteousness and pauperises the nation. I would put the people in a position to help themselves. Oh, I see the remedy afar off, and I fear, I fear!—shall I ever behold that day?"—

"What day, and what remedy, Shirley?" asked Mr. Grant, who had entered.

Arthur smiled.

"The everlasting topic, old friend; you know all about it."

"I could not know *you* without. You have been pitching it into that child, and making

her look as careworn as yourself. Run out and take a walk, Miss Doll."

"I mean to stay here and listen to you," I said.

"What! and hear us talk shop for the next two hours; you don't know Shirley and me."

"You were round in Angel Court this morning, Grant; has anything been done about Boyd's room?" asked my brother.

John Grant's face became grave.

"You must give it up, old fellow; I have no good news for you. I saw the landlord, who said it was ground damp."

"But the water oozes from the wall, not only at the bottom, but for two or three feet above the floor."

"Just so, it is ground damp, and the same is the case in every house in the court. Were the houses strong enough, this could be remedied by under-pinning the wall and putting in some non-porous substance: but, in the first place, it would cost nearly as much as the lease; in the next, the house would not stand it. The only cure is to pull down all the dwellings and rebuild them."

"Well?"

"Well, he won't do that, nor can you much blame him. His lease is a short one, and he is a poor man himself."

"And Boyd will die."

"I would get him into St. Benedict's Hospital; he was an out-patient there for some time."

"What good did that do him?"

John Grant laughed.

"There you go, Shirley. Miss Doll," turning to me, "the fog is not *very* thick, you had better go for a walk. It is at least quiet without, there is no untoward disturbance. Inside I foretell a storm."

"I will brave the storm," I said, placing my feet on the fender.

"It will thunder and lighten. When Shirley gets on Out-patient Reform he is dangerous."

"Abuse! you mean," said Arthur, who looked slightly annoyed. "God knows, if I saw any chance of reform I would rejoice."

"Keep up heart, old fellow, it will come."

"Yes, when the proper number of victims have been sacrificed. Oh, I have cause to speak strongly on this subject," he added, rising from his seat. "Only this morning a child was brought

to me with both its eyes hopelessly destroyed. The mother informed me that she had taken it for the last month to St. Benedict's Hospital as an out-patient, where it had been attended by one of the dressers. The case was a simple one; had any qualified medical man seen the child, its sight would have been saved."

"Does Miss Doll know what we are talking about?" asked John Grant.

"I do not," I said.

"Should you care to know?"

"Yes, I should like to understand what is troubling Arthur."

"Permit me then to lead you to the light. Don't speak, Shirley, let me break it to her. Here is a sketch of the matter: Out-patients are, as you are perhaps aware, treated gratuitously. In consequence, the masses of the people are educated to dependent and mendicant habits; in consequence, also, such numbers attend the hospitals to receive this gratuitous relief, that it is impossible to give the serious cases the attention they demand. Do you follow me?"

"Yes," I said.

"You perceive at once that here are two

evils in connection with this indiscriminate public charity : first, the encouragement of the spirit of pauperism ; second, the impossibility of proper treatment to those who require it. But there is nothing for impressing these things like facts. At St. Benedict's Hospital, a medical staff of ten physicians and surgeons is provided for the treatment of 5000 in-patients a year, while a staff of the same number is considered sufficient for the treatment of 85,000 out-patients."

" How can they attend to such numbers ? "

" Simply by *not* attending to them, or, as your brother tells me, by a system of 'knocking them off,' and by handing the unfortunate sufferers over to students, who ought to be learning their profession. I paid a visit lately to St. Benedict's Hospital, and was informed that on Mondays and Tuesdays, not less than 1000 patients attend. Dr. —— told me that he has had to see and prescribe for 125 men, or for 164 women and 62 children, these being all fresh cases, in a morning's work. He has had, in addition, a considerable number of old cases. One day, he says, he saw and dismissed in an hour and ten minutes 120 patients, or at the rate of 35 seconds each."

"But this," said Arthur, "is not the only evil. By this abuse the in-patients, for whom the hospitals were alone built and intended, suffer also. Miserable as is the treatment of out-patients, a large amount of funds is expended on it, and in consequence, the in-patients cannot be kept long enough to cure their diseases, and the greater part go away simply *relieved*. Nor is this all; we medical men know that nothing is more necessary for an hospital than pure air, but in most cases the out-patient department is in connection with the rest of the building, and the wards are poisoned by the breath of thousands of out-patients suffering from infectious diseases."

"But will not the hospital authorities reform these abuses?" I inquired.

My brother's face grew dark.

"They will not," he replied. "Even to the most moderate petitions for reform they have turned a deaf ear, and"—

"Don't go into that story, Shirley," said Mr. Grant, jumping up. "Listen, Miss Doll, I have a third evil to acquaint you with. It is this: persons well able to pay, obtain relief gratui-

tously. Dr. —, whom I met last week, told me, that it is an undoubted fact that the poor are being gradually turned out of the consulting-rooms by well-to-do persons. He knows of people with incomes of £1000 a year who come to the hospitals as out-patients; and the wives and daughters of men, almost as wealthy, actually borrow their servants' clothes, in order to apply as out-patients. This cruel state of affairs not only robs the public charity and the poor, but has caused starvation and misery to many a young doctor, as the patients who should rightfully call him in and pay a moderate fee for his services, now go to the hospitals and get attended for nothing."

"In the hospital to which I belonged," said Arthur, "it is well known that twenty per cent. of the out-patients gave false addresses, so that it was impossible to trace them."

"I have a case in point," said Mr. Grant. "A few days ago, a young fellow came to my friend, Chester (he is a celebrated dentist, Miss Doll), suffering all the agonies of toothache. Chester examined his mouth, and found a tooth very improperly stopped. On making inquiries,

the fact was elicited that the young man, who was not only able to pay, but moving in the best West-End circles, had gone with a false address to St. George's Hospital, and had the tooth stopped gratuitously, by, it was too evident, from the style of the work, a very inexperienced hand. Chester told his patient that the tooth must now be removed, but, he added, 'I will do nothing for you until you first give me a fee, and not too small a fee, for St. George's Hospital!'

"These things are unbearable," said Arthur.

"Undoubtedly; unbearable, if they continue. We must find a remedy. You cannot expect people to give up one system until you provide for them a better, or at least what you call a better."

"I have a better," said Arthur, again rising to his feet, "I have a plan, to be carried out, God only knows when. I would close the out-patient department in our hospitals, and in place of having these institutions burdened with this dangerous, expensive, and thankless work, I would have dispensaries in every parish. I would have the dispensaries either supported by private subscriptions, parish funds, or by a co-operative system of the

poor of the parish, by which all who paid a small weekly or monthly sum would be entitled to medical attendance when ill."

"In short, you would do away with indiscriminate charity."

"I would cease to pauperise—and I repeat, my first step in this desirable direction would be by closing the out-patient department in the hospitals. It is, as our '*Medical Times*' says :—'A grievance, a sham, and a waste,' but," pulling out his watch, "I forget myself when I get on this theme. I have a case waiting for me. Don't go, Grant—stay and have some tea; I shall be back in half an hour."





CHAPTER XVII.

WHY ARTHUR LEFT ST. BENEDICT'S.

"There are some cases, and his was one of them, in which the sense of injury breeds, not the will to inflict injuries and climb over them as a ladder, but—a hatred of all injury."

—DANIEL DERONDA.

HEN I had Mr. Grant to myself, I delayed a little before getting tea.

"Do tell me about Arthur," I said.

"What about him, Miss Doll?"

"You know what I mean. Why did he leave St. Benedict's? He was so pleased when he was appointed house-physician; he seemed to think it would give him great experience in his profession."

"Of course he was pleased; it was a feather in his cap."

"I am ignorant about such things. Is it an honour?"

"Connection with a great hospital is an object of first importance to a London doctor; indeed, without it, it is scarcely possible for a very high position to be attained."

"Are such appointments hard to get?"

"No degree of merit or ability will win them without influence; your brother obtained this post through one of the governors."

"Then why, when it was so excellent a thing, did he throw it up?"

"Oh, he is doing a good business here. He is, as you are aware, my partner; and though it is the East End, this is an old established practice; between us we may hope to clear £2000 a year."

"*You know* that was not the reason," I said, indignantly.

"Well, then, he *had* to leave; he was dismissed."

Arthur had said so in his letter; but, coming from Mr. Grant's lips, it sounded too much like "disgraced" to be patiently endured. I started to my feet.

"Sit down quietly," said that gentleman. "There!" as I obeyed him, "now I will tell

you the story. Don't be angry with me, Miss Shirley, but I must premise by informing you that your brother is—now don't interrupt me—too conscientious."

"He is nothing of the kind," I said.

"I asked you not to interrupt me. Your brother is too conscientious to expect to meet with success; he is also a strong enthusiast. On reflection, I do *not* think Shirley will ever make his thousand a year."

"He had better live on a hundred a year, and keep his enthusiasm and conscientiousness," I replied hotly.

"There you go! Arthur's sister to the life. Of course he had better keep them, and die a pauper. My dear young lady, I think your Arthur a noble fellow; I only mean to say, that in the eyes of the world—which, God forbid I should belong to—he is not always likely to meet with a favourable hearing. Now, shall I tell you my story?"

"Yes, please," I said.

"Your brother was made house-physician, as you say, to St. Benedict's, about a year ago. I was in my present practice at the time, but

junior partner; and had, I need not tell you, a great deal to do. In consequence, I did not often see your brother, though once or twice when we did meet, he had far from a cheery tale to relate. No sooner was he installed in his office than he found he was expected to see every morning from 300 to 400 casualties, or out-patients, besides going the round of his wards; and he was not long in coming to the conclusion that to prescribe for new patients at the rate of 100 per hour, or 40 seconds a head, was unprofitable, dangerous, and a shameful farce. These, I knew, were his sentiments, and the results hardly took me by surprise.

"One evening I was seated in my consulting-room—I was then without a partner, my old friend having died—when Shirley walked in. He looked fagged and worn, but withal, foolish fellow, rather triumphant.

"'You want a partner, Grant. If we can agree as to terms, may I fill the vacant place?'

"'What do you mean?' I questioned.

"'Just this, the governors of St. Benedict's have dismissed me from my post.'

"I held up my hands in horror.

"‘Shirley, have you been doing anything mad?’

“‘I have, amongst out-patients, refused to see more than fifty new cases each morning.’

“‘Did you suppose, for a moment, they would listen to you?’

“‘I thought it probable they would dismiss me; nevertheless, I did what I conceived to be my duty.’

“‘Shirley, you are ruined for life.’

“‘Ruined!’ said Arthur, with such a ring in his great deep voice as almost drove me to my feet. ‘When a man’s conscience acquits him, and his God smiles on him, is that a time to call him ruined? To say the truth, Grant, since I went to that hospital I have been unhappy.’

“‘More fool you,’ I said, answering the fine fellow in the way such a bear as I am would be likely to.

“‘Shirley sat down by my side.

“‘You consider yourself a philosopher, Grant, but I think what I have witnessed during this past year would have jarred even on your stoical nerves. Day after day, I have caught glimpses—for it was really little more—of weary,

suffering faces, which, *had I time*, I could have relieved. I have obtained the first clue to maladies, which, under God, I *felt* I could have cured, had I had five minutes to bestow on them instead of *half of one*. Mothers with babies have looked into my face with eyes brimful of hope and confidence, and God help me, the best I could do was to order what would do them no *harm*. I have had side glances of persons put to torture, and injured by the inexperience of ignorant students and dressers. *In* the hospital my patients have gone when the cures were little more than begun, because, forsooth, the funds spent on the out-patients prevented their longer stay. I have seen also well-to-do people, who could have given a hard-working surgeon or physician his well-earned guinea, taking up the time and securing the best attention from their poorer neighbours. The whole thing is a fraud, a monstrous imposition on the public and on the poor, and yet you say I am ruined, because I am well out of it.'

" "I fear the whole thing may get a wrong interpretation, Shirley, it will get into the papers and may do you an injury. I do wish we had

talked it over together, before you had taken such a decisive step.'

" 'Do you think it will do me a real injury?'

" 'In the eyes of the world, yes.'

" 'Ah! I see. It has not affected my brains, and it certainly *has* made my conscience a good deal lighter.'

" 'But your practice will suffer.'

" 'That I doubt; *my* story will reach the public as well as the story of the governors, who dismissed me. Already every senior student in the hospital takes my part; but a West-End practice is no longer of moment to me, I mean to come here. For the last two years I have seen what the neglected poor can suffer, and to the poor, God helping me, I mean for the future to devote my time and what skill I possess.'

" 'But, Shirley, the poor cannot pay you.'

" 'In all possible cases they shall pay me a small proportion; I have no notion of pauperising them.'

" 'Yes, yes, my dear fellow, it sounds very well, but you will never be rich.'

" 'That, I can do without. Come, Grant, you

have plenty of poor over here, if you have not engaged a partner, may I fill the vacant post?"

"Done!" I said.

"Thanks, we will arrange as to terms by and by. I must earn something to help the mother and the children, and I have a little sister I should like to give a home to; but you will hand over to me your poorest patients?"

"With all my heart."

"So it was arranged, Miss Doll, very much to my satisfaction. I have got a partner in a thousand. I *do* still often think it a pity his fine talents should be thrown away over here, but bless you, *he* goes into it with all his soul, and if I allowed him, would live in those horrible underground cellars. The poor never had such a physician."

"Mr. Grant, does not Arthur work too hard?"

"Not a bit of it, hard work never injured any man."



CHAPTER XVIII.

CAPTAIN JACK.

"The beginning and end of what is the matter with us in these days is—that we have forgotten God."—CARLYLE.

 FORTNIGHT later, as I was returning home one evening, I was considerably startled by receiving a smart tap on my shoulder, and turning round I encountered the full blue eyes and merry face of Arthur's *protégé*, Captain Jack.

"You won't go a-collarin' o' me, if I speaks to ye?" he demanded.

I thought the question an unnecessary one, the sturdy little lad being fully my equal with regard to strength. I shook my head and smiled, and the boy came up confidently to me.

"What do you want to say?" I asked.

"Well, I don't know as I've got anythink, on'y I see yer goin' by, and I thinks I might speak to you 'bout the gent—yer knows."

"You mean my brother, Dr. Shirley."

"Yes, you tell him as I can't go to that ere night-school no more."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Cause I must knock out a livin', and I is on lays as takes me pretty well all my time."

"I don't care to take him this message, my boy it will make him sorry."

"Sorry?" questioned Captain Jack.

"Yes, and——" Captain Jack stopped, "things to trouble him just now; he's been sick, and——he could try and come."

"No, I can't——" Captain Jack was fat and peckish, and could put away a heap o' grub, and now I 'as another to look arter; there! you sees I 'as no time fur school."

"My brother tells me you are alone, Jack, he does not know you have friends."

Jack laughed.

"She ain't a friend esackly, but all the same she 'ave got to be purwided."

"Who is she, Jack, not your mother?"

The Captain nodded and moved a little away from me.

"Now yer 'as it," he said; "you tell the gent as I is orfle sorry to hurt him, but I can't go to school now no more."

And before I could reply the lad turned on his heel and disappeared. I tried to follow him a little way, but he was quickly lost to view. When I got home I related the circumstance to Arthur.

"I will go in search of him this very night," said my brother. "If that boy gives up night-school he is lost."

"What kind of lad is he, Arthur?"

"Just a street Arab, but the pluckiest little chap I ever met. In one sense he is unspoilable, even his enemies confess that he is game to the back-bone."

"Has the poor child enemies?"

Arthur laughed, and then looked grave.

"Has he friends? you had better ask. He is the ringleader of all the most daring boy-mischief done in the neighbourhood. I don't think he has ever been in prison, but I greatly fear Captain Jack is a thief."

"A thief, Arthur! and yet you praised him."

"From his own standing-point, and with his upbringing, he is worthy of praise. The lad has never, I believe, stolen money, but I fear has taken bread, and sometimes snatched it from school-boys. As *yet* never willingly, and only as he said, 'When I gets that 'ungrateful I can't bear it no longer.'"

• "How did you get to know him, Arthur?"

"Simply enough. I wanted some medicine in a great hurry for a poor woman, in a place called Angel Court. The case was one I could not leave; and the people about seemed so stupid, it was hopeless expecting them to comprehend me. Suddenly this lad, with his bright blue eyes, pushed to the front of a group surrounding me. 'I'm your man, Doctor,' he said. There was no time to think, I gave him half-a-crown and a written direction to the nearest chemist. In ten minutes he was back with the medicine and change. I don't think the neighbours expected it, for they patted him on the back, and some said rather audibly, that Captain Jack was a fool not to have bolted with the money. On inquiry I found that the lad had nothing to eat that day, and but one scanty meal the day before. I took him to

the nearest coffee-house, and gave him a feed, and there found out that I was no stranger to him, and had long ago won his wild, little heart."

"How so?"

"In a way that will surprise you. I had been two or three times instrumental in having him selected to be bandaged at St. Benedict's. I have not the least remembrance of it."

"Was he an out-patient?"

Arthur laughed.

"No, my dear, Captain Jack was bandaged for his living."

"Arthur, what do you mean?"

"Something simple enough. It is a common practice at some hospitals to hire a number of boys or men, to be bandaged for broken legs or arms by the students; in short, as subjects for them to learn their profession on. At St. Benedict's, there are generally enough of real cases without having recourse to sham ones, but it has occasionally been found necessary to hire men and boys for the purpose; for this they are paid sixpence an hour. Jack informed me that boys in his line consider it a capital trade, and those who are fortunate enough to be often

selected, reap quite a harvest, in the season of heavy work in the hospital schools. Jack has been doctored for three broken legs, and two broken arms in a morning, and immensely he enjoyed it."

"Is this what he calls 'the lay' that he is on now?"

"I fear he has a great many strings to his bow, and some far more questionable strings than the hospital bandages. Unfortunately for Jack, the supply there far exceeds the demand. No, he is up to some mischief, or he would not leave the night-school. I have missed him for the last fortnight, and so, in more senses than one, has the master. Finding that *I* disliked any disturbance, he has just dared the other boys to keep quiet; and, as he is at once the terror and admiration of the greater portion of the small fry, he has been pretty well obeyed. Oh! I must not lose the boy; he is nearly certain to be at home now; I will go and find him."

"May I go with you, Arthur?"

"My dear, should you like it? I am going into a very low part."

"But, I want really to see the poor."

"Then, you shall come. Put on your water-proof and your oldest head-gear, and don't be a moment."

I was quickly equipped, and my brother and I set off on our search for Captain Jack.

We went down several by-streets, then across a more open space, until we suddenly drew up before a tall, tumble-down house.

"We are not going in," said Arthur. "Here is the entrance to Angel Court," pointing to a low arched passage running under the house.

I half shrank back, then followed my brother. We emerged at the other side in a court about ten feet wide.

"How is the fever?" asked Arthur of a woman who stood near the entrance.

"It ain't much now, doctor," she replied, dropping a curtsey. "Two died opposite this morning, and two at this end an hour ago, but we've not much now."

"And your son?"

"He's comin' on fine—he 'ave slept for this hour past."

"I will look in on him presently. Can you tell me if Captain Jack is at home?"

"Yes, I 'spect he be ; I saw him 'anging about a little time ago."

"Does he still chum with Larry, in No. 10?"

"He be still in No. 10, but Larry's gone ; he 'ave another sort o' a mate."

It was not yet dark. In the court, gloomy as it was, we could almost see to read ; but when we entered No. 10, and began to mount the staircase, a blackness, almost appalling, seemed to envelop us. I groped forward, greeted, as I ascended, by an overpowering and awful odour. Pausing in a passage, I perceived there was a window by a faint glitter of glass.

"Does it give no light ?" I asked of my brother.

"It cannot, Dorothy ; that window looks into a yard three feet in length by four in breadth. Immediately behind, rises the back wall of a much taller house, so that the yard is like a well. Even in broad daylight, and with the sun shining, the light here is only a glimmer ; and all the back rooms are lighted so."

We ascended two more flights of stairs, and were then directed by angry voices to a door

partly open. Arthur entered, and I somewhat timidly followed.

A woman was crouching over some dying embers in a broken-down grate; her outline was familiar, I could not discern her features, but before I had time even to speak, she looked up, uttered a loud cry, and rushed past us out of the room.

"You there, Captain?" called out Arthur.

A hearty "yes, sir," came in response.

"Then strike a light, I want to see you."

The light was procured, and a truly wretched attic revealed to view. In one corner was a dirty straw mattress (no bedstead) with a blanket thrown over it. By the embers in the grate was a single broken chair, while an old box turned upside down, did duty for a table. Captain Jack's conduct was peculiar. He placed the candle, stuck in an old bottle, on the table, and then, as though drawn by some magnetic influence which he could not resist, came up close to Arthur, but without once daring to look at him, though now and then his bright eyes flashed up side glances at me, full of reproach and defiance.

"I want a favour of you, boy," said my brother.

At these words, Jack shook himself from his lethargy and threw up his head proudly.

"I weren't never feared o' a wolluppin. Wot is it, doctor?"

"Do you know what boys are coming to school to-night?"

"Course, I doesn't."

"They live in this house."

"Tisn't never Thunderin' Tim and Fly-away Smith?"

"Those are the boys. The master will want you to-night, Jack, and when school is over, come round to my house, I have a word to say to you."

"I won't say nothink 'gainst goin', guvernor. I'll be off at once. Oh, my *heyes!* ain't this a jolly go?"

And with three joyous bounds, Jack disappeared.

"There's a boy," said Arthur, laughing. "Dorothy, did you see that woman?"

"Yes, and what's more, I believe, I know her."

"You know her?"

"I cannot recall who she reminds me of. I wish I could have had a glimpse of her face."

"I fear it is too true, she is the boy's mother, and if so, it will be almost impossible to reclaim him."

"Why so?"

"Because her influence almost necessarily is not for good, and with such a relationship one has no right to interfere."

We descended to the ground-floor.

"There is an old man in that room, Dorothy; he would like to see you, I am sure. You might pay him a visit, while I go down here."

"Arthur, *do* people live lower down in this dreadful house?"

"The cellars are all full. No, you must not come down. The poor fellow I am going to see is dying of fever."

I turned away sick at heart, and knocked at the door Arthur had indicated. Some one said— "Come in," and to my surprise and relief, I entered on a scene of much comfort.

A tiny room, scrupulously clean; walls carefully papered, floor partly carpeted, partly white with constant scrubbing. At the window there

hung a small crimson curtain, in the grate was a good fire, and on the neat little table was a paraffine lamp brightly burning. In one corner, though drawn away from the wall, was a bed with a snowy counterpane. This bed had an occupant, the only occupant the cosy little room contained. An old man lay there with closed eyes.

"Why did you knock, Lucy?" he said, and then I saw that he was blind.

"I am not Lucy," I said, "I am Dorothy Shirley, Doctor Shirley's sister."

"Ah! my dear, belonging to him, you come with a sure welcome. Have you time to sit by me, dear, for a little?"

"Yes," I said, "I will stay until Arthur fetches me, he will be here presently." I went and sat by the bed, but did not speak, for little as I knew of the poor, I had already discovered that they like you to let *them* talk.

"And so you have found blind Joseph Boyd out, young miss? Was it the doctor sent you?"

"Yes, Mr. Boyd, he said I might pay you a visit."

"Does you live with him, dear?"

"Yes, sir, I have been here for the last six weeks."

"Aye," murmured the old man, "six long weeks in the dreary East End! 'Tisn't fair on a young thing, 'tis too much for a young thing; away from the bonny West, with the shops, and the parks, and the fine ladies. Well, well; we who live here 'mongst the jail-birds and the paupers, we must be content, but 'tisn't fair on a young thing."

"What a nice, clean room you have?" I answered, thinking it best to take no notice of this speech.

"Aye, 'tis well enough, my dear; the doctor does make a fuss, but old Joseph's werry contented."

"What does the doctor find to complain of in the room, sir?"

"Well, my dear, 'tis werry damp. Lucy, that's my grand-daughter, papers up that wall fresh hevery Saturday of her life. This is but Monday, and pass your hand across it now."

I did so, and the wall was wet, soaking.

"Why is this allowed?" I exclaimed, indignantly.

"Nothink can cure it, young miss—'tis wot they calls ground-damp, it springs up from the ground. Oh! I'm well enough; but picture wot the cellars is! Why, they dies off there, sometimes two in a week, sometimes more—and 'tis the same in every house in the court. Why, summer nor winter, the fever's never out o' this court!"

* "And nothing is done?"

"Well, I doesn't know wot *is* to be done; people *will* live in the cellars, 'tis the cellars as kills 'em off."

"But you have suffered yourself?"

"Well, missy, I mustn't complain; but I can't move hand nor foot with the rheumatiz, and two year ago, I lost my sight."

"From the damp?"

"Well, I 'spect's 'twas the damp. I 'ad the best adwise, but the eyes went."

"Who did you see?"

"Oh! I went to the orspital. I *spects* I 'ad the best adwise, but now and then I 'as my doubts."

"How so?"

"Well, my dear miss, them institutions is werry fine, but they sartinly 'as their drawbacks."

"What are they, Mr. Boyd?"

"Say old Joseph, missy."

"Well, old Joseph, tell me about the hospital."

"I'll just relate how it befel to me, dear, and leave you to judge. Wot with old *hage* and one thing and 'tother, about two year ago, I felt werry weak, and the weakness spread and spread till it reached the eyes. I took fright at once, and thought I'd lose no time, so I got a 'alf holiday from my work, and also an order for St. Benedict's orspital. It were a long walk, missy, and I an old man and weakly. When I got there I felt fit to drop, but I thinks, now I'll see the doctor and get cured. But bless yer 'eart ! that weren't the way. Crowds o' cabs were at the gates, and in goes heaps and heaps o' well-dressed folks wid a West-End *hair* about 'em, all along o' the old feeble men and the sick women and children from the East. We pushed into a big room cram full o' people already. Never a seat could old Joseph get—and there I waited in that place, pushed up agen the wall for three mortal hours, and I see'd all them well-dressed, 'spectable folks a served first. I 'spose 'twas all fair, but I thought they might 'ave 'ad a little pity on the old, old men and the little babbies. My 'alf holi-

day were long past, and I could ill afford then to lose a good day's work."

"But you were seen at last, Joseph?"

"Oh yes, missy, if you would call it a *seein'*. I were shown into a bit o' a room wid ten or twelve other patients, and a young feller came over to me wid never a sign of a beard or whiskers, and looks into my eyes for 'alf a second, and never axed me a question, and then wrote somethink on a bit o' paper and gave it to me; and I were taken by the shoulders and pushed out. Then a woman takes the bit o' paper, and pours somethink out o' a jug, and gives it to me, and I'm told to be back in a week. Well, missy, to make a long story short, I was back in a week, and, if you will believe me, I saw the same young gentleman, who called out, 'Oh! you're an old case. How are you? better? very well, go on the same;*' and turned away without giving me time to reply to him. But I wasn't better, and in a week I came agen, and my eyes were worse and worse. And at last my bit o' a Lucy had to lead her old grandad, and old Joseph could not tell who seed his eyes, for *he* could see nothink; and

* This is the general question put to old cases.

at last they told me to come no more, for the sight was gone. Then I had the rheumatiz werry bad, and was took *into* the orspital. Oh! I were right enough there—every comfort, best of care, best of food; I wanted for nothink!"

"Were you cured, then?"

Old Joseph laughed.

"*Cured!* no, my dear missy; no room, and **no** money, to cure a poor old man from the East End. I was better sartinly; I was beginning to hope for cure, when I got the order to quit. Other folks awanting the room—no more money to spend on old Joseph. Might come as an out-patient. So, lame and blind, and in the dead o' winter, I were turned out, and then, wot wid the damp and the cold, I were just worse than ever agen."

"How did you live, Joseph? you could not work."

Here old Joseph smiled peacefully.

"Missy, the Almighty didn't forget the poor old man. I had a son in America, and just then he wrote to me, when times was so werry hard, and told me never to fear, that *he* would keep the pot boiling; and since then he sends me ten

shillings a week. Oh! I wants for nothink ; bit Lucy comes morning and evening to tidy me up and get my wittles. I'm just a lying here, and a waiting."

"What are you waiting for?" I asked.

"To see the Almighty, young miss; Him as doesn't care 'bout the west end. *Them* has their pleasures in this life, *ours* is to come."

"How do you know that?" I asked, rather startled.

"'Tis writ in the Book, praised be God! *We* shall lie in Abraham's bosom."

"You love God, don't you, old Joseph?" I asked.

"Who could doubt it, miss? Some folks 'bout here think the Almighty hard, but I just tells 'em they hasn't patience, 'twill all come right by and by. The rich 'as this world, the poor 'as the next. Why, the whole o' the blessed Book's full o' it. 'Woe to you when ye are rich.' 'How hardly shall them that 'ave riches.' 'Tis easier fur a camel to get through a needle, than fur a rich man to get to heaven.' Then take it from the other side. 'Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom o' heaven.' 'Unto the poor is the

gospel preached ;' and wots the gospel but the tidins' o' heaven ? Oh ! 'tis all right enough ; all we 'as to do is to bide our time. Often and often, when I stays awake racked wid the rheumatiz, I a'most laughs to think o' it. There they lies, the rich folk, soft and easy, their heads pressed on pillers o' down, trimmed wid cambric and lace ; and there is we, dyin' and rottin', lyin' six in a bed, lyin' on the damp floor, lyin' in the wet streets, lyin', maybe, in the deep, black river. But for all that, 'tis comin' right. *Our day is comin'*, and theirs is passin'. They'll be axin' old Joseph fur a drop o' cold water yet. Ha ! ha ! "

The old man spoke with such bitterness and intensity of purpose, that I shuddered.

" You ought not to feel so," I said. " If you love God, you should love your brother also."

" Quite right, missy, and so I does. I'd share my last crust wid my brother or my sister. Ax the people in the court who helps them, and they'll all tell you, old Joseph. I 'asn't tasted bacca this fortnight, and you picture wot that must be, I 'asn't tasted it, because poor Jem Stokes mustn't come on the parish for his coffin.

The Almighty knows I does wot I can. But if yer means to say that the west end folks is my brothers and my sisters, and I 'ave to love 'em, why, I say let 'em begin wid lovin' me. Why missy, the ladies over there wid their laces and feathers, would not allow the end o' their silk dresses to touch old Joseph, and the gentlemen wouldn't lift him out o' the gutter wid a pair o' tongs. Even at the orspitals which is *made* fur the poor, the 'spectable folks must be served first and old Joseph last."

"But those verses you quoted," I continued, "mean the poor in spirit."

"All right, missy, poor in sperrit and poor in body, right enough, and true enough. Oh! I 'as nothink to complain agen the Almighty, He 'ave it all managed werry fair."

Just then Arthur called for me, and promising to come another day, I went away. But old Joseph had shocked and pained me.

"Are there many like him?" I asked of my brother.

"Now and then," replied Arthur, "I have come across some such bitter spirit, but as a rule, even in the midst of their greatest sufferings, the poor

creatures are sadly patient, they seem not to have it in them to say a word."

"It is dreadful," I continued, "to see an old man, perhaps near his end, and yet with so little idea of what true religion is."

Arthur stopped short.

"He has roused your interest, has he not, Dorothy?"

"He certainly has," I confessed.

"I make him over to you then; I will minister to his body, you shall to his diseased soul."

"Arthur, how can I?"

"You are the one for this work, you represent the class he hates. Coming as you have done to live among the people here, you have already aroused in his mind a feeling of respect. Go on where you have begun. Show him what a woman's heart can feel, what a woman's tact and sympathy can accomplish, though she does come from a higher class than his own."

"But, about his religion?"

"With regard to that I will quote a verse from the Bible for you:—

"Straightway he preached Christ unto him.

Go with Christ to that sick and dying bed ; be sure you don't go with yourself."

" How do you mean, Arthur ? "

" I mean this, you are not to go with yourself alone, nor with yourself and Christ, you are to go with Christ alone and only. Be, in short, the voice which proclaims Christ."

" Is that your secret of success ? " I asked.

" It is the only secret of success. Before you hope to bring old Joseph to a better and happier state, examine well that your own motive is single. Do not in any measure live that he may say : ' How kind Miss Dorothy is ; how beautifully Miss Dorothy speaks ; ' but live on and hope on for the day when he shall ' Behold the Lamb of God.' "

We were both silent for a moment, then Arthur in a different tone continued—

" I must confide to you, that that miserable, degraded Angel Court forms just now the focus of my hopes. I have never given medical advice more hopelessly than there ; in the present state of affairs I can seldom expect to cure, I can only alleviate. Sickness and fever are never out of that place ; but God helping me, I will raise those

people morally and physically, and the first step is to give them better houses."

"How can you accomplish that?"

"I am now in communication with a lady who has worked wonders in more than one London court. If she can be induced to buy this, the place will be saved."

"Is she likely to buy it?" •

"I wish I could think so. Just at present she hardly sees her way to it, the difficulties are many, but I doubt not it will come."

"And in the meantime?"

"Ay," repeated Arthur, "in the meantime, I would say to my soul, '*Wait thou the Lord's leisure,*' yet God knows it is hard to wait."

"But you doubt not it will come."

"I doubt it not. I would accomplish this little good in that small court, but I would also live for a greater reform."

"What is that?"

"I will mention it to you, though you must already know it. I would have our out-patients handed over to dispensaries all over the country, and that department in connection with our hospitals closed. I would have our sick-poor

in the hospitals cured, where cure is possible, not simply relieved, and I would have our sick-poor *outside* the hospitals not put off with a farce of attention."

"And you doubt not this will come?"

"Afar off, Dorothy, but I doubt it not."

"Arthur, may I help you in Angel Court?"

• "You may begin with old Joseph."

"And Captain Jack?"

"That bright boy! yes, I give you permission to do what you can for him."





CHAPTER XIX.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"Out in the desert He heard its cry,
Sick and helpless and ready to die."

Songs and Solos.

CAPTAIN Jack did not appear that night, though we learned afterwards from the master, that he was at the school, and by the mere fact of his presence had exercised a salutary and restraining influence on Thundering Tim and Fly-away Smith. My brother and I rather wondered at his absence, but the next morning early, I was told that he had come and wanted to see me.

I went down to him at once.

"We waited for you last night, Captain."

Captain Jack shuffled uneasily from one foot to another.

"I didn't ought to have promised, that's sartin," he said ; "were *he* angry?"

"Not exactly angry, but he thought you were a boy who would keep your word, so he was sorry."

"S'pose you was to pay fur it wid a wolluppin, would you keep yer word ?"

This was a test, but I thought myself equal to it.

"I hope I would," I said.

"Was you ever a wollupped ?"

"I can't say that I was."

"Then, course you can't know nothing 'bout it. Tell yer, as a real wolluppin as smashes yer bones, makes yer 'owl orfie, not as *I*'owls, but then yer a gal."

Thinking it time to turn the conversation I asked him if he had any breakfast this morning.

"No," he replied in an indifferent tone.

"Will you have some now with me ?"

"I don't care if I does."

I took him down to the kitchen, and provided him with coffee, eggs, and a large plate of cold beef; taking care to eat a little myself, as I wished

him to feel he was breakfasting with me. I took up, however, a book, as I did not want to make him embarrassed ; and a very hearty meal he had. When it was over he gave a sigh of pleasure.

"Thank you, lady, I 'as put a tidy lot away ; but there ! you can 'ave it every day."

"So I hope can you after a little ; but come upstairs now, I want to speak to you."

Jack followed me to the dining-room, and when I invited him to be seated, threw himself in an easy *nonchalant* manner into a large arm-chair by the fire. I had an uncomfortable idea of what Mrs. Jones, our one servant, would say, but thought it best to make no remark.

"I am sorry you suffered from going to school last night, Jack."

"I didn't say as I did."

"You certainly spoke about a whipping. I concluded your mother had beaten you."

"Well no, lady, I thought I'd a catched it, but I didn't."

"How was that ?"

"Mother weren't there."

"Oh!"

"And wots more," continued Captain Jack,
'she ain't a-goin' to be there no more."

"How can you tell that?"

"'Cause I 'as it writ yere."

The captain produced a dirty piece of paper
and handed it to me.

"You'll see 'tis all right, old Joseph read it out
to me."

The all, was not much.

"Good-bye, Johnnie, I'm not coming back.

"Your MOTHER."

The writing was cramped and peculiar, but the
spelling was correct, and above the apparent rank
of the writer.

"You think she won't come back?" I said,
returning the paper to the boy.

"'Course, I *knows* she wont. She took a fright
last night when you came in, did yer see 'ow she
scuttled orf?"

"To say the truth I thought I knew her, but
cannot remember when or where I saw her be-
fore."

"You'll see no more o' her now," said Jack, in a
tone of considerable satisfaction.

"Are you not sorry she has left you?"

"Well, I is, and I isn't. Puttin' one 'gainst 'tother, on the whole, I *isn't*. She wasn't content with wolluppin me now and then, but if I 'ad a few ha'pence, she'd come arter me and shake 'em out o' me. But then she paid the rent o' the room; now I'll 'ave to change lodgings."

"Your mother had money then; did she work?"

"Bless my *keyes*! no; but she 'ad money, a 'ole bag full. She kept it under her piller, and when she'd think I'd be asleep, she'd fall to a countin'. Once, lady, I opened my *keyes* just a wink, and 'twasn't coppers, nor siller I seed, but *gowld!*"

"Then you must have had plenty to eat lately."

"No, I 'adn't, I 'ad to purwide the wittles, *she* paid the rent for the room."

"How long was your mother with you?"

"I dunno; a month maybe, maybe two months."

"How did she find you out?"

"Oh! I is always to be spoke wid fur the axin, in Angel Court."

"And you provide yourself, your mother doesn't help you?"

"She'd larf at the notion, lady; I 'as been on my own hook a good longish time now."

"But you do not like the life?"

"Yes, I does, I is werry contented."

"Come now, Jack," I said, "you know you would like to have something to eat once or twice every day, and also a bed to lie down on at night. I fear much when you give up your lodgings, wretched as it is, you will provide yourself with *no* other. If I can get you some regular work, for which you will be paid something, will you take it?"

"Please, lady, I'd rather not promise."

"Will you come to the night-school regularly?"

"Yes, I'll go there."

"That is right. You are doing this to please Dr. Shirley, are you not?"

Jack nodded.

"I want you to do something for me."

"Wot be that?"

"I have a large class of boys in — school-house every Sunday, and should like to have you among the number; will you come?"

"I wouldn't like to go beyont a 'perhaps' there, lady."

"Why not?"

"'Cause I *does* speak the truth, and I won't say wot I doesn't stick to. I won't promise, I'll on'y say 'perhaps.'"

"Very well, Jack, I will trust to your 'perhaps,' and look out for you." (Here the little fellow smiled.) "I will do more than that. I do not wish you to have no roof over your head, so I will pay the rent of your little home for you, for the next week, on one condition."

"Wot be that?"

"That you clean it."

My small street-Arab's bright face fell considerably at this proposition.

"I will provide you with soap, soda, and a brush, and when the room is clean, will pay you a visit."

"But, *please*, I is werry contented."

"Then, my boy, I must make you discontented. No brave boy ought to like dirt. Come," I added, rising, "is it a bargain?"

"I s'pose so," replied the captain rather dismaly, and he held out a brown, little hand, which I shook heartily in all good fellowship.

The next day, according to my promise, I paid

Captain Jack a visit in his room, taking with me a small roll made up carefully. When I entered he was busily engaged over his cleaning, and a funny business he was making of it. The rough dirt had been swept away, and the floor scrubbed in patches, but the place looked still most miserable and forlorn. Jack's glance, however, round his apartment was one of considerable pride.

"Wot does yer think of it?" he asked.

"I want your opinion first."

"'Tis just a lovely little home," said the ragged boy, poising himself on one leg, and gazing about him.

"It is yours, as long as you keep it clean."

Jack's blue eyes danced in his head.

"May I do wot I pleases wid it?"

"As long as you keep it clean."

"Then Sissy may live yere?"

"Who is Sissy?"

"A little gel."

"Your sister?"

"No, lady, a little, lost gel. I found her cryin' in the street last winter. She 'ave lived wid me ever since."

"Has she lived here?"

"No, lady, in a barrel by the river."

"What do you mean?"

"True enough, lady, that's Sissy's bed. I gets her wittles. Yer sees, I 'as plenty to do."

"How old is Sissy?"

"I dunno—five or six."

"How soon could you bring her here?"

"Oh, in 'alf an hour. She stays in her barrel mostly till I fetches her."

"Then go for her at once—I will wait here for you. Take this shilling, and bring in also some bread and tea."

"Yer won't carry off the young 'un?"

"Certainly not, without your leave."

Jack nodded, and vanished.

While he was away I was not idle. I put on a pair of old gloves, and built up the fire, and lit it. A tin kettle, which stood in the corner, was found to contain some water; this I set on to boil. I had a small, white muslin curtain in my pocket, which I pinned against the tiny, dark window; then I unfastened my roll. It contained a brightly-coloured print of Kehren's *Good Shepherd*. This I nailed up carefully over the mantelpiece.

I had barely completed my preparations when the children returned, Jack bearing in his arms a little, black-eyed, dirty girl, of the gipsy type. She screamed at catching sight of me, and buried her face in her protector's jacket.

"There, Sis, 'old up yer head, and don't be cantankerous," admonished the Captain. "Oh! my *keyes!*" he exclaimed in an altered tone; and, still keeping Sissy in his arms, he stood transfixed, gazing at the picture, "Wot be that?"

But Jack did not heed me, he was gazing at the picture.

"Look! look! Sissy, look at the grip he 'ave took of that little beastie."

"That is a lamb," I said.

"Course, I *does* know 'tis a lamb. I 'as seen

'em in Leadenhall Market. Why, it minds me o' the night Sissy were lost."

"Well, that is a lost lamb."

Here the little child raised a pair of startled, lovely eyes, and gazed at me.

"That little lamb went away from the others," I continued, "and wandered off a long way from home, and could not get back."

"And died," put in Jack.

"No, it did not quite die ; for when the shepherd came in and reckoned the sheep, he missed the little lamb, and his kind heart was sorry, for he loved it, and he could not bear that the little thing should die, so he went at once in search of it. He had to look a long time and go a long way, but at last he found it, and took it on his shoulder rejoicing—you see that in the picture."

"Yes, he 'ave a firm grip o' it, just like I 'ad of Sissy."

"And he brought it home."

"I 'ad no home for my poor little gel."

"Tell me, Jack, how you found Sissy ? "

"Oh ! it ain't much. She were cryin' down by the river. It was one night just arter mother

came 'ome. I 'ad no coppers, and thought I'd 'ave a night in a sugar barrel as I knowed on. All on a sudden I heerd the cry o' a young 'un, and there, settin' on a stone, were she, por little kid! Wot did yer say when I came up, Sis?"

"I runned away, and I were losted," whispered the little child.

"Yes, lady, that were 'bout it. Some one 'ad been a-wolluppin' o' her shameful. Her little arms and legs were bruised and black, and she didn't want 'em to be seen no more."

"You know who this belongs to?"

"No, lady, I don't think. I don't b'lieve she do herself. Come Sis, speak up, wot was yer father and mother?"

"Hadn't none," replied Sissy.

"Wot were yer 'ome?"

"I telled yer I were losted and hadn't none, Jacko," said the little thing, stroking his face playfully.

"That's wot she calls me, lady, and she 'aven't no story, but that she were losted, and had no 'ome, and no father nor mother."

"And you would like to keep ner?"

"I'd like to fight anybody who'd take her from me."

"Nobody shall at present, Jack ; but you must work."

"I does work."

"I know you do, but if you keep that little child, you must work in some regular way. There is a place near this, where I think she would be taken and treated kindly, and brought up respectably. She must be a burden to a ragged boy like you. Shall I take her ? "

At this Sissy uttered a loud cry and clung to the Captain's neck.

"No, no, Jacko, I'll *not* be made 'spectable."

"Jack," I said, "you love that little child."

"I believe I'd 'bout die fur her," was the husky reply.

"My boy, I will make you an offer by which you can keep Sissy, at least, for a time. For the present I will pay the rent of your room, and I know a shop where they want a messenger. I think I can get you the place. It is worth four shillings a week. Then about Sissy, she cannot be left alone, but until I can get her into some

infant school every day, suppose we ask old Joseph to let her sit in his room?"

To my surprise Jack did not seem over-elated; his face was downcast, and he did not speak.

"You need not reply now," I said, "I will give you until to-morrow to think this over. In the meantime, this room is yours for a week, and I make you a present of the picture."

"Thank yer, lady, that 'ere pictur' is real fine."

"You have only heard one-half of the story of that picture."

"It is a true story; if you come to my class on Sunday you shall hear all about it."

But Jack would not promise.



CHAPTER XX.

KILLED OR CURED.

" No room for little Willie ;
In the world he had no part ;
On him stared the gorgon eye,
Through which looks no heart.
Come to me, said Heaven."

GERALD MASSEY.

 N twenty-four hours Jack came to me, having made up his mind to work. With Arthur's assistance, I got him employment as an errand boy, and the ragged idle lad stuck to it, and gave satisfaction ; he attended night-school regularly, and now and then put in an appearance at my Sunday class. I could get no clue to Sissy's belongings, and the little child soon became established in the court as Jack's special property. This tiny creature exercised an influence over her neighbours, great, and for good. All the women in the house petted her, and more than one helped to clean and keep clean the children's room.

Old Joseph talked less of the East End wrongs, and more of the love of God, when Sissy was perched on his bed, and Jack kept honest, and steady, and hopeful for her sake.

Seeing these things, we took no steps to remove her from Angel Court, thereby incurring the displeasure of several well-meaning friends.

* Meanwhile, time went on.

I grew accustomed to my post and to my work. Winter passed and summer came, and I lived it through without any of my young life or energy flagging. Once a fortnight, or perhaps oftener, Arthur and I took the train to Portland Road, and walked about for an hour or two in Regent's Park ; otherwise we saw no green trees or fresh water, and breathed no purer air than was to be found in Butler Street, East. I was well, and my brother had spent many summers in London, and felt no ill effects therefrom. True, he did look pale, perhaps a little more anxious, now and then even a little more worried, than when I first joined him ; but he worked hard, and saw much sin and sorrow and suffering, so this could hardly be wondered at.

The months flew on, the summer heat went by,

and a change, slight, though perceptible, might be discerned as the fruit of our labours in Angel Court. Arthur's friend, from whom he had hoped so much, had been unable to purchase the Court. The ground damp still kept old Joseph confined to his bed, the dark stairs and passages were still unillumed by any ray of light, the cellars still swarmed with human beings, fever still snatched away its weekly, sometimes its daily victim, but still there was the change that two earnest strong men (for Arthur was always assisted by John Grant), can make in a place.

The people of Angel Court began to feel that they were cared for. Their physician was not only their physician, much as that word signifies, he was their friend as well ; helping to raise them morally, and pouring in also a little of that Balm of Gilead, along with those other medicines, which not all his skill could often make successful against the baleful influences and poisonous air of the place.

John Grant got the boys to night-school, established a small savings-bank, and was greatly successful in addressing a mothers' meeting which I had rather timidly organised. I had my special

vocation in this work. I went in for cleanliness. I maintained that the rooms could be clean, notwithstanding the damp, the bad light, the wretched ventilation. My brother and his friend hardly agreed with me here; nevertheless, I went my own way. I consulted Miss Grant on the subject, and this wise old woman not only took my part, but gave me a ten pound note towards the furtherance of my object.

With this in hand I offered prizes, one for the cleanest room, one for the gayest show of window flowers. Also, to every woman who whitewashed her walls I gave a bright-coloured print.

It was astonishing how well my little baits took, and how many comparatively clean rooms there were.

It was pleasing, as well as surprising, to see these stolid, careworn faces light up with joy at our approach. Verily, our work was little, and the fruit small, still the work was real, and the ripe fruit at our feet.

So the autumn of 18—passed away, and old Joseph grew perceptibly weaker, more patient, less grumbling; Sissy was more each day every-

body's pet, and Jack added to his original cleverness and brightness, both steadiness of demeanour and respectability of appearance.

So the autumn went by, and the winter, that terrible, never-to-be-forgotten winter of 18—, came on. The complete failure of the shipping trade, the vast number of ship carpenters and mechanics thrown out of all employment, caused destitution at Millwall, Poplar, Isle of Dogs; but the mischief did not end there. Distress, felt in one part, quickly spread to another, provisions rose in price, work became slack, the weather was unexceptionably severe, and then, ever following quickly on the heels of cold and famine, came sickness and death. Arthur's work lay partly in Poplar; but at our very door the distress was felt.

All the autumn we had seen it coming, and were not unprepared. We had watched the steady approach of this gaunt wolf—now he had come, and at the first signal of his dread presence, my brother threw off the depression which of late was very marked in his appearance and manner, and was strong, and energetic, and cheerful as of old. For the indefinite something I had missed in Arthur on the first night of my life in London,

had hitherto not returned to him. Could the bright trust and faith, so characteristic of his nature, have grown dim?

Of late he had spoken less certainly of his plans being fulfilled, his brow had a look of care, his face had grown haggard.

Mr. Grant enlightened me a little as to the reason.

"He will not let well alone," he said; "he has no present connection with hospitals, and yet the treatment of the out-patients whom he now never sees, and has nothing to say to, affects his peace of mind. He said to me a few days ago, 'I see these things in a stronger light than you do, Grant. I see destitution, misery, death, as the result of these abuses. Keep silence on the matter I cannot, and will not.'"

"What does he do?" I asked.

"Why, he writes, Miss Doll—writes, and speaks at the medical meetings, and goes from one hospital to another gathering facts. Then he sends papers to the medical journals. They are read, and his speeches are listened to, for he puts his case strongly and well."

"And the results?" I asked.

"Miss Doll, there are no results—or, yes, there are. He meets with silence, contempt, now and then with abuse. Our medical brethren do not care to have the hospitals, on which their reputation so largely depends, run down. He has made many enemies and few friends in the matter."

"Nevertheless, he is right," I exclaimed, indignantly.

"Nevertheless, he is wrong," softly repeated Mr. Grant. "Nay, hear me out," as I was about to remonstrate, "he is right to attempt reform, he is right to throw his keen, strong intellect into the matter, but he is wrong to work with his heart also. *There* the strain will break him down. He is wrong to watch the effects of this system by day, and dream of it by night, until his rest is impaired, and his fine spirits injured. I declare, though he is the last fellow in the world I ever expected to say it of, I believe he is getting morbid. Yesterday he told me he expected his life would be a failure. Miss Shirley, your brother is getting out of health."

"I did think so a week ago," I said; "but now, though he works harder than ever, he seems far

brighter and better than I have known him for months past."

"Because the time for immense individual effort has come. Oh! he will meet this high-pressure strain well enough, but God help him when it is over."

I was about to reply, when Arthur, deadly pale, and leading a little child by the hand, came in. He threw himself into the nearest chair, and drew the child forward.

"Can you put this little creature up until Monday, Dorothy?"

"Oh yes," I said.

"And I will give her a shelter until Monday week, if you tell me what ails you," exclaimed John Grant.

"Take the child away first," said Arthur.

I did so, and came back in time to hear my brother's story.

As he was passing a house in Shadwell, a woman had called him in to see three little children down in fever. After attending to their case he was about to leave, when the mother, for whom the children had been piteously crying, was brought in drowned. Her case was as follows:—

"She was a widow, and had supported herself and

her four children for six months on six shillings a week. Sometimes making three slop shirts in the day at one penny each.*

"Since the beginning of the distress, her health had failed her. Yesterday, three of the children began to sicken with the prevailing fever, this morning she felt the premonitory symptoms of serious illness herself. Being ignorant of what really ailed them, she set off with her sick little ones to St. Benedict's, hoping to be admitted with them as in-patients. After waiting in the out-patient department for four weary hours, and probably imparting the fatal fever to many around her, she and her children were seen by a very fresh student, who instead of at once getting an order for the family to the London fever hospital, and thereby perhaps saving their lives, pronounced nothing of any importance the matter, and ordering a little medicine for the children, dismissed her.

"The neighbours who tell the story, say she dragged herself home, not yet three hours ago, put the sick children back into bed, kissed them each, gave them a dose of the miserable medicine that had cost her so dear, and then with a wild

* A fact.

light in her eyes went out. Whether the fever got into her head, and caused what followed, I cannot say. Had she been taken to the hospital founded and instituted for cases such as hers, her lifeless body would not have been lying in the room with her three little dying children now!"

"What have you done about the children?" asked John Grant after a pause.

"I have brought the healthy one here with me. A neighbour will see to the others. I must go back there to-night."

"Let me go, Shirley, this scene has shattered you."

Arthur smiled.

"As you please, old fellow; I believe I am a trifle upset. But no," he added, suddenly recollecting himself, "that little one with blue eyes clung to me. I only could soothe her about her mother. I shall sleep easier if I see the children again."

"What hour will you go?"

"I don't know—about nine."

"Do you object to my accompanying you?"

"By no means, but you have work enough of your own."

John Grant rose to leave.

"I shall look in here at nine o'clock," he said,
and went away.

When he was gone Arthur turned to me.

"Dorothy, dear, I have news for you."

I went over and sat by his side.

"What news, brother?"

"This morning I had an hour or two to spare,
and I went down to Dulwich."

"Why did not you tell me? I should have liked
to have gone with you."

"I wished to go alone—I saw them all, and"—

"Well?" I said, for Arthur had paused.

"I have brought a message from your mother
for you, Dorothy."

"What is it, Arthur?"

"She wants you to go home."

"Arthur!"

"She says she is miserably anxious, and that
she considers your life in danger. She does not
desire you to come, she leaves it to yourself. But
she wishes you to know that she would like you to
come back to your family for this winter. If I
want you in the spring, and things look brighter
then, you may return to me."

"I shall not go," I exclaimed in my old excited manner; "I shall not run away from my poor people, now when they really require me? Why, Arthur, old Joseph would think me cowardly."

"The question, dear, is not what old Joseph will think, but what is right for Dorothy Shirley to do."

I was silent for a moment.

"What shall she do, brother?" I asked then, very quietly.

"God knows, Dorothy, I don't."

"Then, you won't advise me."

"I can't advise you. I can only put the case strongly before you. This is a question God and you must decide together."

"Well! put the case strongly, put it strongly both ways," I said. "If I go, what will happen?"

"You will please your mother, and join what is, I am truly thankful to say, a very cheerful and happy home."

"And if I stay?"

"Ah! child, if you stay, God help you."

"Yes, Arthur, He will help me. What will happen if I stay?"

Arthur's dark eyes seemed to read me through.

"Have you faith?" he asked. "If you have, quadruple that faith, for if you stay in the East End this winter you will need it. From head to foot you must be clothed with the armour of God. You must have courage, too, Dorothy, courage and hope. For courage, faith, and hope, will all be sorely tested. The struggle is only beginning, and already it is black and dreadful. If you stay here, you must witness hunger, cold, destitution in their worst forms; sickness in its worst form; death in its worst form. If you stay, too, and put your hand to any work, you must not turn away; once for all, you must count the cost."

"Arthur, is a woman full of courage, faith, and hope, likely to be of use?"

"Could such a woman be found, she would be an untold blessing."

Then I was silent, and after a time I slipped away from Arthur's side.

But that night when he came back from the children's dying beds, and he had told me, quietly now and without any excitement, how the little one with blue eyes had gone off peacefully, with her head on his arm, whispering "Mammy," and smiling as if she saw her,—when Arthur told me

this, with, brave man that he was, a voice that trembled, then I put my arms round his dear neck, and said something in my turn.

“God and I have decided it, brother.”

“Well, dearest?”

“I will stay with you.”

Then, Arthur took me in his arms and gave me two or three fervent kisses, and he said, “Thank God,” from his heart.

I think that night we both felt strong to meet the coming trouble.





CHAPTER XXI.

OLD JOSEPH FORGIVES THE WEST END.

"Evermore

My heart is sore
For my own land's sins : for little feet
Of children bleeding along the street."

THOSE were the dark days before Christmas. The fog, and cold, and little light of those days make them gloomy enough every year; what were they this? The distress came on apace, but we were ready for it. To a certain extent, our poor people—our own special poor people—were ready for it too.

As well as we could we guarded them against it, helping a few hundreds, out of the thousands, to pull through.

The change which the beginning of this time of trouble had brought to Arthur went on and increased. He was now bright and strong as of

old—perhaps a little stronger than of old. His face was no longer anxious, the look of worry had passed away. More ready, more eager than ever, was he to relieve distress, to throw himself into the heat of the conflict; but his own heart seemed now resting firmly on some sure rock—was it the Rock of Ages?—and earth's dark days had ceased to affect his peace.

Owing to the prevailing illness, it was found impossible to visit all the sick poor in their respective homes, and he and John Grant were busy trying to organise some temporary dispensary, where those who were not too ill might receive proper attention and medicine, either for nothing, or, if they could pay, at a trifling cost. In this undertaking they were successful. A subscription was set on foot, Miss Grant heading the list. Funds to a small amount were raised, a room was hired, one or two young surgeons from the neighbourhood, and even some from the West End, volunteered their services. During the distress the place was open during the greater part of the day, and very much good was done, and a vast amount of suffering relieved by its means.

In Angel Court, this winter, old Joseph came to be regarded as a wealthy man. Where so many were actually without any employment, and consequently without money, he had his ten shillings coming in regularly every week. In this emergency the blind man showed some true nobility and self-denial. Lying alone, and in the dark, his pipe was his great solace. •

One dreary, foggy afternoon I came in, and found him without his small, cheerful fire, and without light.

"Why, Joseph, how cold you must be!" I exclaimed.

"Eh, missy, I'm glad yer come. Is it six o'clock?"

"No, it is only four. May I strike a light?"

"Sartin, dear miss, Eh, but the day is long."

This was to himself; and when I had arranged his neat little lamp, I saw traces of tears on his cheeks. I laid my hand on his arm.

"What ails my dear old man?"

My hand was seized, and covered with kisses.

"Dearie, 'tis nothink—nothink. Old Joseph's werry peaceful; on'y, maybe I'm a bit low without my morsel o' 'bacca."

"Why have you not your pipe, Joseph?"

If sightless eyes could reproach, those the blind man turned towards me at this question would have done so.

"I 'as my room, I 'as my bed, and my bit o' wittle reg'lar; must the little children starve to keep the old man in 'bacca?"

* "Has it come to that in the court? Joseph, are there children starving?"

"Well! mor'n one puts up wid a meal a day. I does widout my 'bacca for them; I does widout my fire for Sissy."

Jack:

"Missy, yer has not been in the court fur a week."

"I am sorry to say I have not. I could not find a moment to run round."

"Well, miss dear, things come on quickly these dark days. That 'ere boy's unfortnet; that's all."

"What has happened to him, Joseph? Surely nothing bad. He was so brave and bright, and getting on so well in every way."

"Wot knocks under many a brave 'eart these yere days, young miss, want o' work. Want o' work 'as come to the captain, por little chap! There's never a murmur out o' him, bless him! 'Twas all fair,' he said, 'the master didn't want no errand boy these hard times.' Oh! Captain Jack's game to the backbone; 'tis'nt that'll kill him. But, there's worser'n that!"

"What is it, Joseph?"

"Missy, yer'll keep it dark—Sissy's yere in hidin'."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say, miss. He 'ave her hiddin' yere, and he sleeps yere o' nights."

"What has become of his own room?"

"He 'av'nt no room—that 'ere 'oman's come back."

Here Sissy stirred, opened her eyes, and began to cry.

The old man patted her fondly.

"Come now, Sis—hush! hush! Behave pretty before the lady, Sissy!"

Sissy gazed shyly at me for half a second, then shading her face playfully with one plump little arm, turned to the old man.

"Will it be soon 'fore my Jacko comes 'ome, old Joey?"

"Werry soon he'll come now, dearie—werry soon."

"Will he bring supper?"

"You and me'll 'ave supper together."

"Won't my Jacko 'ave none hisself?"

"Oh yes my pet, he'll likely bring in some to-night. But speak to the lady, Sis, she's the Captain's werry good friend."

Thus recommended, Sissy deigned to look at me, and when I held out my arms came into them willingly enough.

"Is this little girl hungry?"

"No, tisn't Sissy."

"Who, then?"

"Oh, my por Jacko!" This with a great sobbing cry.

"I b'lieve the boy ain't quite well," explained old Joseph. "Not that he complained to me, but I hears him moan, moan o' nights. Wot is it, Sissy?"

"His por neck, oh, it *do* ache!" said the child.

"Joseph," I said rising, "will you send the Captain to me the moment he comes in. Tell him —no, give him no message. Tell him to come, I shall wait in all the evening for him—and stay," I added, an unaccountable feeling I could not overcome prompting me, "give him this from Miss Dorothy."

And I put half-a-crown into the old man's hand.

I had reached the door when he called me back.

"Will my dear miss give the old man a word o' comfort afore she goes?"

"From the Almighty, old Joseph?"

"Oh! dearie, them is grand words; but the times is werry dark, and, I think the old man 'ud rather have a message from the blessed Son to-night."

"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"Hark!" said the old man, "lovely words! consoling words! Is them for the poor, missy?"

"For poor and rich alike—all who want rest."

"Ah! well, I doesn't mind. It fits to old Joseph any way; and I 'as been thinkin' lately 'as the pillows o' down couldn't bring rest."

"Not *that* rest."

"Por creturs! I 'as it, thanks to the dear Lord,
I'm willin' as they should. Fur a long time I
wer'nt, but now I be. I furgive 'em fur Jesus' sake."

"Thank God, Joseph, for that."

"Missy, say them words again."

I did so.

- "Yes, I is willin' they should share in the rest.
Even them as blinded me at the 'orspital. I means
them from the West End as should 'ave paid fur
their doctor and went in first, takin' the time from
the old man, and the sight from the old man.
There was one in a seal jacket as sat next me, the
last day as I could see. I were creepin' in and she
pushed past me. I 'as the hard look on her face
stamped *yere*," pointing to his head, "for ever,
for hers were the last face as I ever seed plain ; but
I furgives her to-night fur Jesus' sake."





CHAPTER XXII.

THE CANVAS BAG.

"Be sure your sin will find you out."

ARTHUR was not in when I got home. The fire was out, the place dark and gloomy. This was as it should be, for Arthur and I practised small economies as well as our poor neighbours. The dining-room fire was put out after breakfast, and not re-lighted until the evening. If I happened to be in, I went to the kitchen to have a warm. We had no gas in the passages, and no sweet things at our table; and this, while it could hardly be called self-denial, yet enabled us to give away a considerable sum weekly.

Mrs. Jones, our servant, entering into the spirit of the work, proposed a private soup-kitchen, and into this soup went every scrap of superfluous

food ; nay, more, she herself, without mentioning her intention to us, went round to several well-to-do trades'-people in the neighbourhood, begging of them to put by their broken bread, and meat, and vegetables for our soup. This they did, and Mrs. Jones sometimes gave out fifty or sixty cans of good soup in the day. This cost us nothing, and was simply made out of what would have been thrown away, or otherwise wasted ; but I have no doubt it helped to save many lives during this hard time.

Coming in to-night, cold, chilled outwardly, chilled, saddened, and anxious inwardly, I lit the fire, drew the curtains, and sat down to wait for Arthur, and to wonder how soon Captain Jack would make his appearance. Of all Arthur's *protégés* this little lad was his favourite. He had hoped much for him, done what he could to advance his small interests, and had loved him well. And the boy seemed to repay his care.

When the first step was taken, and the easy street life laid aside, he had made rapid strides towards respectability.

Only a month ago his master had raised his wages to six shillings a week, and as I still paid

for his room, he and Sissy managed to live in, for them, considerable comfort. He attended the night-school regularly, knew how to read, and was learning to write; and every Sunday, for months past, he might have been seen carrying Sissy aloft on his shoulders to Sunday-school. Rules had here to be relaxed in her favour, for Sissy stoutly refused to leave her protector to join the infants, and, in consequence, stood by his side, the only girl in my class. To this day, I remember the look of fun and love and earnestness, all combined, in my little street-Arab's frank, blue eyes; his sturdy, searching questions, his intelligent replies, his excited attention when a story was being told, his easily-moved feelings.

He grew really fond of me; but after Sissy, who, perhaps, came first, the ruling passion of his heart was his love for Arthur.

With intense interest and pleasure, my brother watched the little fellow's progress.

"I will give him no unnatural pushing," he said; "no training so good as what God has put in his way, but with the blessing of the God who has watched over the lad all his days, I will make a brave man of him."

"And a Christian, Arthur?"

"My dear, he can hardly be what I term the one without the other. But I have little fear for him; he has overcome temptations now, which young fellows of eighteen or twenty, more delicately nurtured, have still before them. That lad has stuff in him, which, if properly trained, will enable him to take a foremost part among the Christian soldiers of the world."

"How should he be trained?"

"As he is being trained. By his self-denying, independent life—by his love for little Sissy,—by God."

So Arthur said, and waited full of hope.

But for two Sundays the Captain had not been at his class, he had attended night-school but irregularly, and now I heard that he was ill, and had lost his place,—worst of all, that his bad and wretched mother had returned.

When he came to-night I would remonstrate with him, for not at once letting us know of his trouble. I felt sure that Arthur's influence could secure him some situation. If not, we would give him employment ourselves, and if necessary, he and Sissy should find a refuge in our house.

But why did not he come? why, too, did not Arthur come?

It was dinner time, past dinner time. I ordered mine up at last, and ate it alone, and in silence. Arthur's delay could be easily accounted for, but somehow I grew strangely uneasy about Jack.

At nine o'clock Mr. Grant ran in for a moment to tell me that my brother had two or three critical cases at Poplar, and might stay there for the night. I was not to wait up.

I wished to tell Mr. Grant my anxiety, but he had hardly a moment to spare, and was turning away, after begging of me to sleep with his cousin if I felt lonely, when something in my face caused him to come back to me.

"What is wrong, Miss Doll?"

Then I related my story, adding, "I am uneasy about the boy, I can scarcely explain to you why."

"Will my assurance, that you have little cause for this feeling, satisfy you?"

I smiled.

"I fear," I said, "it will not."

"I see—you will lie awake all night over this. I must run round to Angel Court and find the truant."

"Oh! thank you, will you indeed? But you don't know old Joseph's room, and it is there you must look for him."

"I shall find it at once if you come with me; here is your hat and your jacket."

In less time than I have taken to tell it, I had donned my walking apparel and gone out with John Grant. He was in a hurry, and I felt sure thought me womanish and fanciful, but such a strange fear was tugging at my heart, I could not let him go to what seemed far more important duties.

In silence we reached Angel Court, and in two minutes were in old Joseph's room. The old man was just putting out his candle, and raised his sightless eyes in alarm.

"Has not Jack come in?" I asked.

"Eh! the Captain!" exclaimed old Joseph. "Yes, dearie, he 'ave come and gone agen, two hours ago. Have you not seen him?" he asked in a tone which shared my anxiety.

"I have been waiting for him," I said, "and grew so uneasy I came here."

"Well, dear, he came in about an hour or so after yer went. I think he must 'ave come across

his mother somewhere. He came in werry excited, and caught up Sissy and were runnin' off wid her, when I call him back and give him yer message. He took the money quite greedy like, and never opened his lips—when just as he got to the door, he stopped short and ran up to me—and kissed me, por little chap! and there were two big tears left on my cheek, and he said to Sissy, 'Kiss old Joey, Sissy, and say good-bye,' and before I could speak, he were off. But I made sartin he 'ad gone to you, missy."

"He never came to me," I replied, "and now where is he? Mr. Grant, we must find him."

John Grant's look of slight indifference had given place to one grave and anxious.

"The mother is the only person likely to give us any clue," he said. "We had better come at once and speak to her."

I drew back for a moment. I was rather afraid of this mysterious mother; but John Grant held out his hand, and I ran after him up the stairs.

The door of what was Jack's room was open about an inch, and a bar of light on the staircase wall, showed that its inmate was still up. As we

came on I heard the faint, unmistakable clink of money.

We entered without knocking, and in doing so I glanced at the lock, it was slipped forward: but in her hurry the inhabitant of the room had overlooked the fact, that the door itself was ajar.

A bright fire was in the grate, a candle stood on the table, and under the picture of the Good Shepherd a woman was kneeling, counting several golden coins on a chair by her side. She raised her face with a guilty start, and Miss Janc's old servant, Rebecca, was before us.

I think Mr. Grant recognised her before I did. She was greatly changed, worn to a literal skeleton. When she saw us she tried to cover the money with one skinny hand, and raised the other half menacingly. John Grant went back and locked the door.

"Now, Rebecca," he said, "how much of my cousin's money have you got there?"

At these words, the stupor of terror which seemed to have taken possession of the woman passed away, she covered her face with her

hands, rocked herself to and fro, and began to sob violently.

"I'm ill! I'm weak! I think I'm dying. And I've been robbed. Don't send me to prison. Miss Shirley, beg him to have mercy, you always were kind-hearted!"

"Yours is a case for justice, not mercy," said Mr. Grant. "I tell you plainly, I have no pity for you, nor will I allow the young lady to show any. But, whether I deliver you to justice or not depends on yourself. Now, hand me over that money."

Rebecca looked this way and that. Then seeing there was no escape, raised a little canvas bag and handed it to him. It contained twelve sovereigns, and about eight shillings in silver.

"Rebecca, if you conceal anything from me now, in two minutes you are in the hands of the police. Is this all you have got?"

The wretched woman went on her knees.

"Before God, I am speaking the solemn truth, I have not another farthing. I say I was robbed. Last week, only last week, twenty pounds were taken from me: twenty bright,

beautiful sovereigns, all gone, taken by one wicked hand."

"How much did you steal from my cousin?"

"Ah! sir, it wasn't stealing. Savings. Perhaps I were *too* saving. I *did* stint a little, but then"—

"Don't prevaricate, woman; tell me the truth. How much did you take?"

"Well, well, you won't send me to prison if I speak the truth, yer pledged to that. One hundred pounds. No, two hundred, and, yes, and twenty-four pounds. Not a penny more, dear sir. And she did not want it, never, never missed it."

"Miserable creature!" I said, breaking in for the first time. "You are half starved, and have only twelve pounds left. What did you do with it?"

"Eh! miss dear, my heart's broke, fairly broke for the beautiful, beautiful money. I kept it so safe, and sure, and careful. I allowed myself nothing almost to eat or to drink. But for all that it was took, a little here, a little there, till this was all that was left. Only to-day two pounds were taken, and to-

night I meant to bury it somewhere. I did, I did!"

"Enough!" said Mr. Grant, stamping his foot impatiently. "Now, tell me what you have done with the boy whose room you are in. Speak the truth, mind."

The look of terror deepened on Rebecca's face. For a moment she seemed unable to reply.

"Wot of him?" she asked then.

"Is he your son?"

"Ah! yes, before God."

"Do not call God to witness your unhappy speeches. When did you see him last?"

"To-night; a while ago. I don't remember how long."

"What did you do, or say to him? You *did* something. Now, the truth."

"Nothink, he was sarcy a bit, and I give it 'im."

"What did you give him?"

"Well, maybe a touch on the cheek, not much; he screamed, the young villain, and said I hurt his neck. I hardly touched him."

"Do you know where he is now?"

"No, that I doesn't!"

John Grant was silent for a moment.

"I will make you a proposal," he said. "I can send you to prison; but, make your mind easy, you may go. You have, however, money, and this money is not yours, so I shall take it," emptying it out of the canvas bag, and handing the empty bag back to her.

Rebecca uttered a cry.

"Wretched woman! this money goes back to-night to its rightful owner, but, two sovereigns I shall retain, knowing I have her free consent to my doing so. These sovereigns shall be given to whoever finds the boy known as Captain Jack, and bring him, along with the little child Sissy, to my house, 28 Butler Street. You can earn this reward. In the meantime, here is a shilling out of the odd silver. Now, as Miss Shirley rents this room, and it belongs to her, we must ask you to leave it at once."

He opened the door, and Rebecca, with drooping head, and bent, abject figure, crossed the threshold, the *most* miserable of all the miserable objects I have ever seen.

"You have been too hard on her," I said, bursting into tears.

John Grant took my hand in dismay.

"Why, my dear Miss Doll, I have been too merciful to her. I cannot tell you the loathing with which she inspired me. I would have sent her to prison, but for the boy · but I feel she will find the boy."



CHAPTER XXIII.

DR. DUNLOP.

"Is it our fault, you reply,
When throughout civilisation,
Every nation's empery
Is asserted by starvation?"

MRS. BROWNING.

Y visit to Angel Court had, alas! only confirmed my fears. I slept little that night, and rose almost before the break of day.

I wanted to tell Arthur, feeling sure that he would use some strong measures for the recovery of the missing children. I ran downstairs, and, first of all, invaded Mrs. Jones's premises.

"Had my brother come in?"

"Oh yes! she had left him seated over a good fire in the dining-room, but he had been up all night and seemed very tired."

I went in search of him at once. I opened the dining-room door.

How full my heart was of Jack and Sissy, how instantly, when I entered that room, all memory of them faded in the presence of a greater trouble. Arthur was not seated by the fire, he was half stretched across the sofa. His face had a livid and blue tint, his eyes were closed, his hands clenched, he was writhing in some mortal agony.

"Don't come in, Dorothy, call Grant."

These words were gasped, rather than spoken.

Quick as thought I flew to the Grants' side of the house. Mr. Grant had not yet gone out—I brought him to my brother.

"No, Miss Doll, you had better leave me alone with him."

He went in, shutting and locking the door.

I sat down on the floor outside, and listened and waited. A moan or two first reached my ear, then these ceased, and words were spoken in low tones, which gradually became louder and more cheerful. At the end of an hour the two men came out together.

There was I, my face pressed against the

panel of the door. Mr. Grant took my hands and drew me to my feet. Arthur put his arm round me.

"My poor darling! you need not be frightened; don't sit there, come in. What is this story about Jack?"

"How are you, Arthur?"

• "All right now. I had a sharp paroxysm of pain, but it has passed. See, foolish child! don't I look just as usual?"

His face, even to his lips, was colourless, but his eyes were bright, his expression happy.

My fears would have been lulled to rest, but for one circumstance. *John Grant would not look at me.*

Arthur came back into the room, placed a chair by the fire, and seating himself drew me on to his knee.

"We have no time to lose about the children, Dorothy. Grant will put the case at once into the hands of the detective force."

"And Miss Jane has promised to expend all the money recovered from Rebecca, in rewards to any one who brings a clue to their

whereabouts," said that gentleman as he left the room.

Not a word more about Arthur's sudden illness, he told me simply once again that he was now quite well, and, as he seemed so, and I did not see Mr. Grant even once for the next three days, and in consequence could learn nothing from him, my fears really slumbered.

Arthur was very busy at this time, drawing up statements and collecting cases to form material for a paper which he meant to read at the next meeting of the —— Society.

When not actually with patients he was busy over this, and appeared hopeful as to its results.

The Dispensary also was doing well.

It was regularly opened, and Arthur hoped it would be carried on, on the principle of the Poplar Medical Association. At present, owing to the great distress, it was impossible to adhere strictly to these rules, but Arthur was very firm in obliging all those who *could* pay to do so.

At Poplar the rate of payment, for all those earning over thirty shillings a week, was two

and sixpence entrance fee, and threepence a week afterwards.

For this sum the subscriber secured medical attendance, advice and medicine for himself and each member of his family under sixteen.

Arthur explained these rules to his patients, and, so greatly did many of them prefer this plan to receiving aid from charity, that notwithstanding the prevailing distress, he had very few *but* paying patients, while he so strongly disapproved of the spirit which indiscriminate charity engenders, that I do not believe on one single occasion did he refuse these payments.

Meanwhile, the excitement about Jack and Sissy was great.

Angel Court was in an uproar.

A boy, hardly better than a common street boy, and a little nameless girl, having rewards offered for them, and even placards printed about them.

Willingly did Angel Court aid in this search, and sometimes ten times in a day did Thundering Tim and Fly-away Smith appear at our door, furnished with clues that, alas! always led to nothing.

As my fears for Arthur subsided and died away, my anxieties with regard to the children became strong. Very weary my head grew during these days, wondering as to the possible length of time half-a-crown could support them. Mrs. Jones, who was accustomed to the poor, assured me that on the score of starvation I need have no uneasiness. Jack was far too old a street-hand to allow himself, or his charge, to die for want of food. My money would provide him with capital to lay in stock of some saleable commodity, and he was doubtless doing well as a little gutter merchant.

I was silenced, but not comforted.

Vague were my fears, but not the less disquieting and uneasy.

At last, however, a real clue seemed forthcoming. A man came with the intelligence that he had seen two children, exactly answering to the description of Jack and Sissy, calling at the house of a certain Dr. Dunlop in Q— Street. The boy appeared ill, and hung down his head ; he had first remarked him by the peculiar way in which he held it. Both the children seemed very destitute.

"I know Dr. Dunlop," said John Grant. "Some

one ought to see him. These may really be the children."

"Won't you go, Mr. Grant?"

"I fear I cannot possibly spare even half-an-hour. I am overwhelmed with cases to-day."

"Then I will go."

"Should you mind?"

• "No, not much. Will you give me a card of introduction?"

I obtained it and set off.

What kind of man was Dr. Dunlop? Would he help me? Had he been of service to my lost children?

I arrived at his house, but was half-an-hour too soon. The doctor was not at home. I walked about for twenty minutes, then with a little impatience, joined to uneasiness at my own temerity in calling on a stranger, returned to the charge.

I had my hand on the house bell, and was just about to ring, when a man appeared at the surgery door. He was a large, burly man, wearing a cloak fastened round his neck by a chain of some sort of metal.

He looked like a beadle, but beckoned me to

advance with all the concealed anxiety of a doctor expecting his fee.

At my first glance, I thought him wanting in the milk of human kindness, and approached him trembling.

"Do you want to see me?"

"Yes, sir. You are Dr. Dunlop?"

"I am. Walk in."

He conducted me through the surgery into a small consulting-room.

"Dr. Dunlop," I began hurriedly, "I am not a patient."

The doctor had all the airs of a great man in his profession ; he stopped short at these words, and surveyed me from head to foot, with an eye which appeared anything but favourable.

"I have brought you an introduction from Dr. Grant," and I handed him the card.

He took it in silence, then again examined me gravely.

"May I ask what you *do* want with me?"

"Sir, I came to ask you a question—Have you any recollection of two children who called at this house some day lately?"

I then went on to describe Jack and Sissy.

adding, "We have lost children exactly answering to that description."

As I went on with my tale, all hope of obtaining help from the big man before me faded from my mind. The chain on his cloak was glistening before my vision,—his eyes gleamed angrily.

"Really, madam, you should put such cases into the hands of the police,—my valuable time"—

"We have done so, Dr. Dunlop, but this is the very first clue we have obtained."

"Well, I did see the children you name. But—good gracious! I can't talk to you now—a bad case is waiting for me. Come some evening—some evening at six."

"Only, sir, please tell me what they came for."

"The boy came because he was ill, Miss"—

"Shirley, sir."

"Because he was ill, Miss Shirley. He wanted a recommendation as out-patient at St. Benedict's. I did better than that. I thought him a fit case to be taken into the hospital, and said so. But, what did you tell me your name was?"

"Miss Shirley."

"Anything to Shirley who was dismissed from St. Benedict's a year or two ago?"

"Yes, Dr. Dunlop, I am his sister."

"His sister! goodness me, young lady, why did you not say this at once? Why, I admire Shirley—I am heart and soul with Shirley in this movement."

The man's whole manner and bearing had changed; he was now as full of fire and interest as before he was rude and indifferent.

"I should like to shake hands with your brother. Is he still agitating for reform?"

"Oh yes, sir."

"That patient must wait; I have a word to say to you. Have you a good memory?"

"Pretty well," I said.

"Then tell your brother that Dr. Dunlop,—he knows Dr. Dunlop by name, *of course*. Tell him, that I am heart and soul, and hand too, with him in this work. I disapprove of out-patients at our big hospitals, and, for the matter of that, at our small hospitals. I would have *no* out-patient department, because, *first*, too many patients; *second*, too few doctors; *third*, injury to in-patients; *fourth*, injury to doctors outside the hospitals; and *fifth*, good to none."

Dr. Dunlop told off these reasons on his

fingers, and was proceeding further to enlarge on the theme, when I interrupted him.

"Would you not call to see my brother, sir? You would have a great deal to say in common."

"Very well, child, some evening I'll drop in. Tell him that out-patients have made Dunlop a poor man. Every one goes to the hospital, even those I attend don't pay. By the way," taking up Mr. Grant's card, "you know this fellow?"

"Yes, he is my brother's partner; we live in the same house."

"Take him a message? eh?"

"Certainly."

"I want Grant to do something for me."

"Yes, sir."

"The fact is, I am suing a patient for debt,—shameful case! His plea is that I did not treat him properly, that's absurd! common illness! His case won't hold for a moment. Ask Grant to appear in Court for me."

"I will ask him, sir."

"Thanks! I'd rather have him than a general practitioner over here."

"You can give me no other particulars about the children, Dr. Dunlop?"

At these words the man grew big again, and his chain began to glisten.

"The boy is at St. Benedict's, I presume. I recommended the girl to the workhouse. Good day, Miss Shirley; don't forget my message to your brother. Good day; that's your road."

I called a cab and drove to St. Benedict's, on my way reflecting that Dr. Dunlop rode a hobby, but was no real enthusiast in the cause of humanity. The out-patient *department* in the hospitals made his spirit burn, and his eye flash fire, but one little out-patient, one atom in the vast ingredient, was a weariness to his flesh.

I reached St. Benedict's, and inquired for Jack.

Alas! his name was not on the books, nor was he himself in any of the comfortable wards.

On all sides I was told that no such boy had ever sought for admission.



CHAPTER XXIV.

REBECCA PROMISES.

“With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,
And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,
• Pain for thy girdle, and sorrow upon thine head.”

SWINBURNE.

THAT very evening Mrs. Jones came to say that a miserable-looking woman waited in the hall to see me. I went down, and there was Rebecca.

She stood silent and shivering, her great black eyes glaring at me out of two deep caverns.

“Come in here,” I said, leading the way into the dining-room, and shutting the door, I waited for her to speak. She did not at once, but putting her hand into the bosom of her dress, drew out the empty canvas bag, and shook it in my face with something between a laugh and a cry.

“No, I have *not* found the boy. I know nothing of him, he’s nothing to me.”

"Why, then, did you come here, Rebecca? I am not the person to help you."

"Yes, you *are* the person to help me. You are the only person. Do you know that through you this little bag was emptied? Do you know that I am ill, I am dying: of what? Not of hunger, though I only ate a dry crust to-day; not of thirst, though for two days only cold water passed my lips; not of nakedness, though I have no petticoat under these rags," holding up her tattered gown. "But I am dying of this empty bag, of the weight of this empty bag. Lying here!" pointing to her heart, "it presses until it almost suffocates. At last it will stop my breath. O Miss Shirley!" here the miserable creature went on her knees, "my heart is broke for the beautiful yellow gold. Oh! as you are kind and good, give it back to me. Give one golden sovereign back to me! Not to *spend*, oh no! I'd starve sooner, but to feel and kiss and give me comfort." Her eyes and gesture were like those of a maniac; she clutched hold of the table-cover, and put it over her face.

"There!" I said, speaking soothingly, and touching her on the shoulder, "you are weak and not

yourself. Sit in that chair,"—it was the one her son had used,—“and I will get you something to eat.”

She obeyed me, half falling into the chair, and putting her head back as one exhausted.

She was a thief, and there were one or two articles of value about, but I felt I might safely leave her then, and ran off to fetch a basin of Mrs. Jones' soup.

She took it eagerly, devouring it without a word —she was really famished.

While she ate, I drew my chair up to the fire, wondering how I should act, or what I should say next.

“Why are you kind to me?” asked Rebecca suddenly.

“Because you are a great sinner,” was the answer that rose almost unbidden to my lips.

“Eh! why that's the reason you should cast me out, and take no notice of me.”

“No, it isn't. Jesus Christ was kind to sinners.”

“But you ain't Him.”

“Indeed I am not, but He left me an example that I should follow in His steps.”

“How is that?” asked Rebecca.

“If you came to Him and told Him you repented, He would be very sorry for such as you.”

"And you are sorry?"

"I am—I pity you from my heart."

"Then you'll give me the gold."

The wild light, quieted for a moment, had returned to the woman's eyes; she rose and approached me half menacingly.

"No, Rebecca, that I have not for you. Even if I wished it, I have not so much as a sovereign at present in my possession."

"Then ten shillings—one little half sovereign, bright and yellow! O Miss Shirley! to keep me from suffocation, to keep me from dying!"

"Rebecca, that is not what is really killing you; but if you want the gold, why do you not find your son?"

"Give me the half sovereign and I'll bring him to you."

"When you bring him, you shall have the two sovereigns promised, not before."

Some unaccountable feeling seemed to rend the wretched creature's heart; she paused, and hesitated, then raised her head. "Anything for the gold, the beautiful gold," she said. "Miss Shirley, you shall have him to-night," and without waiting for my reply, she went away.



CHAPTER XXV.

IN-PATIENTS AT ST. BENEDICT'S.

"His love incomprehensible,
Did never turn away
From penitent whom harm befell;
But springeth like a desert well
For thirsty poor astray."

WOOLNER.

NHAD a hope that Rebecca would really find the children. I stayed up until midnight, and when I did go to bed, my slumbers were disturbed by uneasy dreams, and still more uneasy wakings. Nobody arrived, however.

It was now very near Christmas, and dull and gloomy as everything looked, some slight preparations were made even in Angel Court for keeping this festival.

One day Mr. Grant came to me with an idea.

"Shall we turn our plum puddings into a Christmas tree for Angel Court?"

I think for the first time I considered my brother's friend foolish.

A Christmas tree! when people were dying of hunger.

"Come," he said, laughing, and looking me in the face, "I won't give up my plums and raisins for common bread and butter."

"And I won't give mine up for ginger-bread and cakes," I stoutly responded.

John Grant laughed again.

"Listen to this chit of nineteen. Do you suppose, my dear, that you are to dictate to a man of eight and thirty? Come! if you will listen to me, I will show you some sense in this mad scheme."

Of course I had to listen. I sat down patiently.

"Miss Doll, I have come to you to aid me. The fact is, we must have a change. I have just come from Angel Court, and I find things in a sad way. The people are dying there. But not, as you suppose, of starvation. We have used measures, in that place at least, to keep this gaunt wolf at bay. They are dying of panic! The gloom of the place is profound. Idle and drunken men lounge at the doors. Women lie in bed all day

beside their dead children, and are often dead themselves by the following morning. Each district visitor wears a longer face than the last. Your window gardens are all dead. Your coloured prints mostly used to kindle their fires. I wonder when a laugh has been heard there. Now, if we want to save any lives, we must banish this. Do you know that large store-room we use for the mothers' meetings?"

"Yes," I said.

"To-night there is to be a fire there—as many bright lights as I can procure, burning; and I will read aloud the most comic bits from Dickens for an hour."

"Mr. Grant!"

"Just so, Miss Shirley. Will you co-operate with me here?"

"What can I do?"

"You can come down and laugh. Yes," he added, seeing my astonishment, "you and Mrs. Jones shall come down. She is a bright, hearty soul, and between you, you shall keep the laugh going. A good ring of genuine mirth would be the best cordial for those poor hearts just now."

"I believe it would," I said, roused by his enthusiasm.

"Then, before we leave, I mean to tell them that on Christmas Day we will have in that barn as large a Christmas tree as we can procure, and will demand their help in getting it up. The women shall decorate the room; the men shall bring the tree home, and fix it in its place; the children shall cut gilt and paper ornaments."

"But where is the money to come from?"

John Grant put his hand into his pocket.

"This generally buys my cousin's and my own Christmas presents, cards, extra dinners. This year we have a mutton chop each. It does just as well." And he placed a ten-pound-note in my hand.

"We, too, will have mutton chops, and you shall have five pounds," I said. "I know Arthur will wish it."

"Then you have a lot of clothes to give away?"

"Oh yes," I said, "something for almost every one."

"They shall go on the tree. A pound or so will ornament it well enough. The rest of the money we must spend on food; apples and oranges for

the children ; they cannot be left without pretty things ; and buns, bread and butter, and tea for every one. When the thing is over I'll exhibit a magic lantern with comic slides. They are not above such things down here."

"I am sure it will be an excellent plan," I said.

"Better than doctors' physic, though I am a doctor myself."

The plan took well, and was vigorously carried out.

The men and women were pleased, first for the children's sakes, for the young things were wild over the idea, afterwards for their own.

To this day I remember how busy their little clever London fingers were weaving wreaths and ornaments for what they proudly called "Our tree."

Some of them knew how to make artificial flowers, and, supplied with coloured paper, we had roses, carnations, pinks in abundance.

In the end we had not to buy any ornaments, the children made them all.

Arthur gave this idea his hearty sympathy.

"What a bright fellow Grant is," he said to me.
"He is the best fellow I know."

"Why do you think so, Arthur?"

"Because he never talks of his religion—he lives it."

At this time Arthur had finished his paper for the _____ Society, and was to read it before them the next day. He was more confident about the effects it would produce than I had ever seen him.

"There are cases of out-patients' abuse here which all just men, think what they may, *must* listen to," he said.

He was also cheered by another cause.

In his arduous work and his self-denying life he had met with a kindred spirit. A young man, son of an English Bishop, had come to live close by.

Resigning all the intellectual enjoyments for which he was most fitted, he gave himself up to the great cause of the people.

The name of Edward Denison is now well known in the East End. I met him once, and can best describe him in the words of his biographer.

"In manner, the kindest and the gentlest; in speech, somewhat impetuous; endued with an unassuageable sense of truth, that led him to re-

ject all formula, opinion, or even usage, that was not founded on some sound ascertainable principle ; deeply imbued with a large noble disinterestedness, and an honesty of purpose but too rare in these latter days, and with it that subtle characteristic of genius—vital unrest ; it was not without cause that he had inspired his friends and his family with the promise of a great career."

The promised career, so brilliant and so quickly run, was now commenced in Philpot Street, Mile End Road. This man resolved to see with his own eyes, and take an actual share in the terrible struggle going on. There Arthur met him, and the two quickly became friends.

Both earnest, and seeking the truth, both uncompromising in word and deed, both having the same interests at heart, this could hardly be otherwise. Had Edward Denison lived—had Arthur—well, I will not say what might have been—what schemes carried out—what hopes accomplished—what good done—I will only say and think that God knows best.

Cheered by this friendship and sympathy, I had never, since I came to London, seen my brother look more like his old self than now ; and strange

to say, even the absence of the boy, who held so warm a place in his affections, seemed to cause him no overpowering anxiety.

One evening, when the reading in the large store-room had come to an end, there was a shout of applause as the people's favourite physician, more beloved even than John Grant, entered.

Arthur went to the top of the room, and stood beside his brother doctor.

"My friends, I have a remark to make to you."

There was instant silence, broken by cries of "Hush! listen to the doctor."

"You are all a great deal better and brighter than you were a week ago."

"Yes, that we be," from several voices.

"I think these readings have done you good."

"Right you are, doctor."

"You know our Dispensary?"

"Of course."

"I think that, too, has done good."

"Faith! then it have," said a stalwart Irishman, who stood by my side.

"'Tis five years come Lady-day, since I broke this right arm. I went regular to St. Benedict's, and had it set and dressed, and by the same token,

it should have been done well, for five different young gentlemen had the bandaging of it."

"But," raising his voice, "'tis the truth I'm tellin', and no mistake, not a stroke of work could I do at all, at all, until *he*," pointing to Arthur, "took it in hand."

"I re-set it, friend."

• "May the Vargin be praised! and Heaven be yer bed! I'm all right and hearty now, and when the work comes, can go in for it with the best of 'em."

"I believe a great many of you will be taken back into work after Christmas."

A shout of joy from the poor creatures.

"Friends, shall we thank God?"

To the few simple words of grateful acknowledgment which followed, there was not one dissentient voice, nor, I think, one dissentient heart.

The next day would be Christmas Eve. Alas! the blessed season seemed coming in brightly enough that night. With many promises from me to come down early about the tree, with blessings from and to us all, we went home.

I had not left my room in the morning when

Mrs. Jones came to me. Would I go off at once to St. Benedict's? A woman, calling herself Rebecca Digby, was very ill, they thought dying, and wanted to see me.

"Of course I would go. Was the doctor in?"

"No, he had been sent for to some urgent case."

"Then I must go alone."

Mrs. Jones offered to accompany me.

"No," I said, "you may be wanted here. I shall not perhaps be long."

I hurried off, and arrived at the hospital before ten o'clock.

When I mentioned my errand, I was taken up at once to the accident ward. As I entered I heard a voice which I could not mistake.

"Give me the little canvas bag. Here's the money—fifty—no, forty—no, 'tis fifty bits of gold—hard, and yellow, and lovely. Hush! I say, put 'em in safely. Don't wake the boy—he had nothing to eat to-day, and I took his tup-pence. He *did* beg for a penny. Little rascal! his eyes are blue like his mother's."

I touched her arm.

"Rebecca, I have come to you."

"The lady you wished for has come, dear," said a nurse who stood by.

"What's her name?" she asked.

"Dorothy Shirley," I answered, bending over her.

"Ah! I wanted to speak to *her*. What about? Now I know. No, Miss, I ain't delirious."

* "She is not, Miss, either, not exactly," said the nurse. "'Tis more weakness. She was brought in here a week ago with her leg broken—a cab had gone over her. She was very weak, and for the last two days has been sinking a good bit."

"Stoop down," said Rebecca.

I bent over her.

"I knows 'bout the boy."

"Where is he?" I asked.

"Down in a barrel by the river. Him, and a little 'un with black eyes and hair, like a gipsy."

"You saw him there, Rebecca?"

"Yes, I did, crouching down and cryin', and the little 'un cryin' close to him. I could 'ave put my hand on him that night. It was the night he ran away."

"Why did not you?"

"Because I hated him. I hated him more'n I loved the gold."

"Did you make him run away?"

"I did. I made believe he had stole two sovereigns from me."

"Why did you do so?"

"I wanted to be rid of him. I knew he was always about. So when he was asleep I slipped two into his vest pocket; and when I told him he took 'em, and he denied, I just put in my hand and drew 'em out, and said I'd tell his fine friends he was a thief."

"What did he say?"

"Never a word. He went white to the lips, and turned and ran down-stairs."

"And you call yourself his mother?"

"Yes, but I ain't his mother. Once I *ad* a bonny boy, but he died. A woman who slept with me lay on him in the night, and he died, and I was so mad with her, I was fit to kill her own boy—but I didn't; I took it and ran away with it, and made b'lieve to folks 'twas my son. I brought him up for a year or two, but I *never* loved him; and lately he grew so like his mother, as murdered my boy, I hated him out and out."

"Is the mother living?"

"No, she fretted and fretted till she died. Ah! I 'ad my revenge fine, I 'ad."

"Don't talk of revenge now, my poor dear," said the nurse; "turn your thoughts to better things."

"Why?" asked Rebecca, looking up with a startled face. "Am I very bad?"

* "That you are."

"So bad that I'll die?"

"The doctors think you will die."

The nurse after saying this turned away, as if unwilling to witness the change this awful intelligence might produce. But her charge lay still with closed eyes, so quiet and motionless that, after watching her for a few moments, I thought she was asleep, and was about to move away. She heard me, however, and opened her eyes.

"What's that I've got to do?"

"Rebecca, I fear—I fear you've got to die."

"But I ain't ready."

"You have a little time left still—you can get ready."

"I can't."

"You can. Jesus says, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'"

"Nurse, I'm just sinking, give me something to drink," she said faintly.

The nurse gave her a cordial.

"There, dear, you're better now. Listen to the young lady."

"You think me a great sinner, Miss Shirley?"

"Yes, Rebecca."

"Does Jesus Christ?"

"He does."

"But He means me to repent?"

"If you truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, He will fully and freely forgive you, even now at the eleventh hour."

"But I don't repent—not a bit—not a bit. If I had it to do again, I'd do it again. I'd revenge myself on that young woman, and, oh! I'd take and keep the gold, the beautiful, yellow gold."

"May I pray for you?"

"I don't mind, but it ain't the least use in the world."

Nevertheless, I knelt down, and cried earnestly to the God whose ear is not hardened, for this poor, lost, and dying sinner.

I prayed aloud, hoping that some word of mine might reach her. As I proceeded she grew quiet.

and when I ceased, I fancied there was some slight softening in her wild, bright eyes.

"Are you going?" she asked.

"Yes, I have to leave, but I shall go on praying for you."

"I'd like *you* to forgive me."

"With all my heart; but not half as willingly as the Lord Christ will if you let Him."

"You're sure of that?"

"More sure than I am that I am now standing beside your dying bed."

She closed her eyes, and the nurse motioned to me that she could bear no more, so I left her.

I never saw her again, and many events following thickly on each other prevented my immediately inquiring her fate.

When I did, I learned that she died quietly some hours later. I asked, Was there any word of repentance?

"No word," replied the nurse, "but the last thing she did was, to motion to me to burn the little canvas bag."



CHAPTER XXVI.

OUT-PATIENTS AT ST. BENEDICT'S.

What of the wanderers out in the cold?

ST. BENEDICT'S is one of our largest and best appointed hospitals.

As I went down the wide stairs, into the hall, and out at the front entrance, I saw a crowd of people, some well dressed, some the reverse, all flocking towards a certain portion of the building.

I immediately guessed that these were the out-patients, and instantly formed the resolve to go in with them and see for myself what their treatment was like. Being quietly attired, I had no difficulty in mingling with this vast mass of human beings, and presently found myself in a large, well-ventilated room, capable of seating

about six hundred persons. These seats were quickly filled, and I, with many others, was left standing in the centre of the room. I think there were a thousand people present.

Some were comfortably and well dressed, some bore unmistakable marks of belonging to the upper ranks of society, and were doubtless considered, and considered themselves, ladies and gentlemen. I remarked that these people all got seats, and as a rule were admitted into the consulting rooms, of which there were six, before their poor neighbours. In the middle of the room was a rough dispensary, where the patients went to receive their medicines. This part of the establishment was under the care of two female nurses, and in many instances I saw the dose taken on the spot.

Observing that I was standing, one lady motioned me to her side, where she good-naturedly made room for me.

"See, dear, I don't suppose you have come before. You are a new case."

"I was never here before, ma'am."

"Well, you must tip that porter. Give him half-a-crown, or even a shilling. He will let you in in good time then."

"I don't like to do so, ma'am. I think the poor should go in in their turn."

"Oh! that plan you will find will never answer. You may have to wait for *hours*. A shilling to the porter will make all comfortable. See, he quite expects it."

"To say the truth, I am not a patient at all. I was visiting a poor person in the hospital this morning, and had a curiosity to see what the out-patient department was like."

The lady drew back a little, and seemed inclined for half an instant to be careful, and retire into her shell; but the desire for some amusement during the tedium of waiting overcame her prudence.

"Well, my dear, your taste is strange. I should not care to poke my nose into such a stuffy, stifling place, unless I were ill. However, when you *do* come as a patient, you must tip the porter."

"Do you find the treatment here beneficial, ma'am?"

"Yes," said the lady, "on the whole I do. By the way, my husband tells me there have been some letters lately in the *Times* showing the abuses of the out-patient department, and wanting to close it altogether. How monstrous that would be?"

"I have also heard of abuses," I said.

The lady mistook me, and, bending forward, became more confidential than ever.

"Well, you see some of the *poor* are treated by dressers, or medical students, who could not be expected, well as they may understand those wretched creatures, to do much for *us*. But all you want here is a little skill and management. It really lies in a nutshell. I have always tipped the porter, perhaps rather *well*, and have never been treated except by one of the cleverest physicians or surgeons—the class [redacted] who, in their private practice, require *guineas* [redacted] on all occasions. I am comfortably off, and in a good position in society; but what with myself, my children, and servants, my doctor's bill always came to a heavy item in my year's expenditure. I managed it of late this way. My husband became a governor for ten pounds a-year, so of course he can give letters and orders to any amount. I now always go myself, and take the children, and what I save pays the governess's salary, and a great part of the cook's."

"Do you like having your husband's name on your letter or order?"

The lady laughed.

"I don't give it," she said. "My right name and address are not known here. My dear, don't look shocked, very few people in our position give their right addresses. Such a step would never answer."

At this moment a porter arrived, and obsequiously begged of the lady to go into a certain consulting-room, which she did, accompanied by her two children—the porter clearing out of her way a crowd who might well be termed poor, maimed, halt, and blind.

Seeing this disorderly and miserable crowd, and observing how unfairly their claims to attention were set aside, I could not help comparing their cases with such as are admitted as in-patients.

What bodily comforts now surrounded that poor dying woman I had just left. She lay on a snowy bed, plenty of air around her. Her least want was attended to by a skilfully-trained nurse. The most suitable diet was given to her; and even as I left the ward, one or two noted surgeons were bending over her bed, and carefully examining her symptoms.

Such a place, and such care, must lead to cure

where cure was possible; but what chance had these wretched creatures?

I longed to convey them all to my brother's new dispensary, where their cases would at least receive some attention.

My lady friend was moving out, nodding to me and looking pleased and triumphant, when there was a slight disturbance in the crowd, and a ragged boy and a little child were pushed roughly against me.

I looked up, and there were the missing children.

My first object was to pull down a thick veil I wore, through which I knew they would not recognise me. My next, to recover from my surprise, then to stay as near them as possible. Their fortnight in the streets, their fourteen or fifteen nights spent in a sugar barrel, had necessarily changed them both.

The little girl looked white and ill—but the boy's appearance sent a pang to my heart.

In truth I could with difficulty recognise the poor little fellow.

Wasted, emaciated, deadly pale, no light in his

blue eyes, all his jaunty gait and old buoyancy of bearing gone.

He stood with his head strangely hanging, holding the little child, no longer in his arms, but by one of her tiny hands.

The men and women were supposed to sit at opposite sides of the room, but I made a place for the children by me, where they were glad to take shelter, never guessing who they were so near.

"I 'spect I'll be tuk inter the ospital to-day, Sis," said the Captain's voice. "They won't turn us out no more now, they'll know as I is very bad! See! I 'as the letter as that doctor gave me, all tight and snug yere."

And he pointed to a paper clasped firmly in his bony little fingers.

"Wot 'll come o' *me*, my Jacko?"

"I'll ax 'em to take you in too, darlin'—yer ain't well, you knows. Yer'll be with the little children, *werry* warm and nice, and wid plenty o' wittles."

"Is they nice little childrenses?"

"Real, awful nice little uns!"

"And 'as we dinners, and breakfases, and teas, ~~he~~every day, Jacko?"

"Yes, he every day. Yer'll get a fat little girl agen—oh!"

This last was a prolonged groan of great agony which the poor boy in vain endeavoured to repress.

"My por—por Jacko! is he *werry 'ungry?*"

"No, Sissy, 'tis my neck. Oh!"—another groan, lone and patient.

The little child slipped her hand into his, and they sat in silence.

I had a bun in my pocket which I gave her. She devoured it in the manner of a famished creature, offering, however, a portion of it to Jack, but he could not eat.

To this day I do not know how I kept beside the children during the three long hours they had to wait, without declaring to them who I was. Some unaccountable desire to see the tragedy, if it was to be a tragedy, played out, had taken possession of me.

At last their turn came, and something of colour and hope came into the boy's face, as leading Sissy by the hand, he marched into the consulting room.

I think the children were the last seen that

day. In what seemed a minute's time they were out again, a doctor accompanying them.

"This boy wants to be admitted as in-patient," he said to another medical man who stood by, "but I shall not pass him. Simple case—glands of neck swollen—painful enough—nothing serious. I shall order a liniment."

"Ah! just so," said the other carelessly. "Nurse, fill this boy's bottle—same as last week."

And so Jack's case was dismissed. There were no more patients, and in a moment we found ourselves in the bitter frosty air, outside the gates.

"It looks *werry* warm up there," said the boy piteously, as he leant against one of the massive iron rails.

Then I threw up my veil and came to him.

"Jack, my poor little fellow—my dear little fellow, why did you leave us?"

Never shall I forget the sudden light that filled those beautiful blue eyes. He tottered towards me, and sank in a heap at my feet.

I hailed a passing cab, and drove off with him and Sissy.



CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SHEPHERD SOUGHT HIS SHEEP.

- “He took me on his shoulder,
 And tenderly he kissed me,
 He bade my love be bolder,
 And said how he had missed me.”

FABER.

 DROVE back to the entrance of Angel Court.

Here the cab would not pass, but the cabby, a good-natured fellow, hailed a little lad who stood by, to hold his horse, and carried the boy in tenderly enough, while I followed with Sissy.

I paused for an instant to get the key of their room from old Joseph, then took the children with me up there.

A number of women and children who had been busy carrying greens and ornaments to

the great store-room for "our Tree" left their employments and followed me.

I chose one woman to help, and turned out the rest.

She and I laid the boy on his bed, and while she lit the fire I ran round for Arthur. I had not much hope of finding him in.

This was the day of the meeting of the —' Society.

Perhaps even now my brother was rejoicing in his hard-earned triumph. I almost wished not to find him in, for in truth I dreaded the effect of what I had to tell.

Familiarity with suffering had brought no hardening of the heart in Arthur's case; on the contrary, he seemed more sensitive to sorrow year by year, and of late his distress had appeared to me not only mental but physical.

He had returned, he was going out again; but the moment I looked in his face, I no longer feared telling him my news. Something had happened.

I could not tell, I could not guess, what this something was, but I knew that for the time it had rendered him impervious to any further blows.

"I thought, Arthur, you were reading your paper at the — Society."

"I will tell you of that presently."

"Well, you must come with me now."

"Where to?"

"To poor little Jack."

"Dorothy, have you found him?"

"Yes, Arthur, and oh! he looks dreadfully ill."

Then I gave him a sketch of my morning's adventures.

"They called it swollen glands! Well, we shall see."

In a few moments we were bending over the boy's bed.

He had recovered from his unconsciousness, and lay quiet, his eyes open. Sissy, perched on his pillow, was softly stroking his yellow curls. His dull and sunken face lit up at sight of Arthur, and he made a feeble effort to raise himself.

"Don't excite yourself, dear lad, stay still. I have come as your doctor, and must ask you a few questions. There! you *may* hold my hand if you please.

"Now, just answer me in as few words as you

can manage to use. How long have you felt this pain?"

"About two months, a little."

"How long, badly?"

"A month, may be."

"How long very badly? It is bad now, I fear"

"Oh! since I run away, oh!"— Here the little fellow began to cry.

"Don't mind about your running away now, we will come to that presently. What of the pain?"

"I can't 'old up my 'ead nohow, 'tis so stiff. It 'ave been stiff from the first."

"Stiff ever since you felt the pain?"

"Yes."

"What else did you, or do you, complain of? Tell me everything."

"I couldn't throw my 'ead back, not for nothink, and when I turned it, my limbs would shake like."

"My Jacko wouldn't pick up my ball," chimed in Sissy's little voice, with an injured air.

"Hark to her," said the boy smiling, "ain't she a cute little 'un to 'member that? We used to 'ave a game *he*very night wid a soft ball, sir, her and me. Her'd throw it, and I'd fetch it back to her. But since my neck got

stiff I couldn't stoop, not widout great pain.
That's wot she's thinkin' on. But 'tis a long
time back now, darlin'," he added, putting up
his lips to kiss the child.

"Sissy 'members 'bout naughty Jacko," said
the small thing, shaking her thick hair.

"So it hurt you to stoop, my boy. What do
you feel most now?"

"Oh! yesterday I 'ad headache so as I couldn't
stand, and my back were bad. Now, it ain't
much, on'y this hand," touching his left, "feels
dead like. I can't lift it."

"How long have you felt it so?"

"Just since I left the 'orspital. It ain't nothink,
I'm werry nice now."

"Are you easy lying down?"

"Yes," with a sigh of relief.

"Tell me why you thought of getting into the
hospital."

"I met a lad as 'ad a broken arm and was 'tuk
in. He liked it *werry* well."

"How long have you been trying to get in?"

"I went a week ago. They said the pain were
nothink."

"Did they give you anything to use?"

"Yes, that bottle," pointing to one Sissy held in her hand ; "but it did hurt orful. It were arter that I felt real bad."

"How did you manage to use it?"

"I knew a lad as rubbed it in fur me. I thought as it 'ud mend the stiffness."

Arthur took the bottle in his hand, examined its contents, and handed it to Mr. Grant, who had entered the room.

"What do you call this?"

"A preparation of mercury. I should say about two grains to the ounce."

"Now, my boy, turn on your face and hands. Mr. Grant and I will soon find out what is the matter with you."

The doctors proceeded with their examination in silence.

John Grant was the first to speak.

"Do you find any swollen glands, Shirley?"

"Yes, there are several much enlarged on the left side."

"What do you ascribe them to?"

"Caries of the cervical vertebra."

"So I fear. They ought to have known it; but after all, the complaint is uncommon."

"It is; but the symptoms are too plain to be easily misunderstood."

"You are right," said Mr. Grant; "see here, and here," pointing with his finger. "That, with this peculiar hanging of the head, makes it unmistakable."

"Undoubtedly."

"He ought to have been in bed a week ago."

"Yes, rest was indispensable."

"It has gone very far."

To this Arthur made no reply.

They turned the little fellow very tenderly and arranged his pillows. Then the two men went out of the room.

I heard them talking in a low tone in the passage—in a moment or two Arthur came back, and John Grant beckoned to me to come to him.

"We had better engage some woman to stay with the boy. He may suffer—he ought not to be left."

"He certainly must not be left—but I fear I shall find it hard to get any one, to-morrow being Christmas Day."

"Ah! he will not want them then."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"The lad is dying."

I leaned against the wall and gasped for breath.

"It cannot be," I said.

"It is too true, Miss Shirley—the disease has gone past cure. Yes, it *is* a case of murder. Common care a week ago might have prolonged his life, might have saved him—now he must go. Poor little victim to this great abuse, he must pay, for it with his life. But better for him, I doubt not, better for him."

I could not speak, I was silently weeping.

Mr. Grant put his hand on my shoulder. "Don't cry," he said, "he is leaving a cold world. Go back and do what you can for him. I will fetch some medicine—and listen, Miss Doll, *I don't care to have Arthur agitated*!"

Strange that these words, uttered in a significant tone, should have possessed little meaning at the time for me.

"Will you ask Mrs. Jones to come?" I said.

"Yes, I will call for her."

When I returned to the room, my brother was seated with Sissy on his knee; Jack had again got possession of his hand, and looked happy.

"Why did my boy leave his old friends?" he was asking as I entered.

• The white face grew troubled.

“Oh! it was ‘cause I *did* love yer, and I couldn’t
abear as yer should take me fur a thief.”

Arthur seemed surprised, but answered soothingly—

“We never took you for that, dear boy.”

• “Didn’t mother tell yer?”

“I have not seen your mother.”

“You never heerd o’ the money?”

“I have heard nothing bad of you, Jack.”

The little fellow was trembling from weakness and agitation—now he smiled.

“I *did* love yer,” he repeated touchingly, “and I couldn’t no way add to yer troubles—but I allus meant, when I got work, and mother were gone, I allus meant Sissy and me to come back.”

“Jack,” I said, moved by some impulse I could not restrain, “that poor woman is not your mother.”

“Oh! but she be.”

“No, my dear little fellow, she is not. This very day she told me she was not. She stole you from your real mother, who loved you well.”

“My mother loved me well!”

“She loved you so well that, after you were

carried away, she fretted and fretted until she died."

Jack lay and pondered.

"I am *werry* glad," he said slowly.

"What are you glad of?"

"As my mother loved me."

Then he closed his eyes, and presently dozed, away into a kind of semi-slumber. I sat by his side, and so did Arthur until sent for to some other patient. We got in no strange nurse, but stayed with him ourselves, watching his weary sleep, and soothing his startled and frightened wakings.

He constantly recurred to his past privations, forgetting where he was, perhaps slightly delirious.

"Oh! 'tis the last bit of bread—give it to Sissy," he whispered piteously more than once.

But the pain we dreaded did not come, only that strange numbness, symptom of his peculiar disease, spread all up his arm, then to the other then attacked his legs—at last his breathing became difficult.

Arthur came back as soon as he could and helped me to take care of him, quieting with his

skilful touch the little fellow's growing weakness and uneasiness.

He had hardly spoken for some hours, when suddenly, as the first grey dawn of the Christmas morning broke, he turned his blue eyes to Arthur and whispered something.

"Please, put a light under the pictur."

We did so, and the beautiful face of Kehren's *Good Shepherd* was thrown into strong relief in the darkened room.

The little fellow gazed at it tranquilly, then again turned to Arthur and smiled.

"He 'ave me *werry* tight."

"Who, dear lad?"

"The Shepherd o' the sheep."

"Do you love Him—the Lord Christ Jesus, my dear boy?" asked Arthur, for Jack had never spoken of any religious feeling.

"Yes."

"You will see Him soon."

"Yes," with another smile.

He never spoke after, but passed away quietly, as the chimes were sounding for the Holy Communion service in the church close by.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

FAITH TRIUMPHANT IN FAILURE.

“Follow thou Me.”

“My soul followeth hard after Thee.”

ME gave Sissy, who was asleep and unconscious of her loss, into the charge of a kind-hearted neighbour, and after pressing one farewell kiss each on our boy's tranquil forehead, went quietly and in silence home. It was early yet—we had gone through much, and needed a few hours' rest.

When we got in, I went to my room and lay down, having first extracted a promise from Arthur to do the same.

I was weary, and was really dropping asleep, when a sound in the next room, which was my brother's, completely awoke me.

He was not in bed, he was pacing the floor;

he was—yes, strong, self-controlled man that he was—weeping aloud.

Great sobs of agony came through the thin wall and reached my ears. In a moment I had risen, and was doing all I could do in such a strait as this, for one like Arthur,—I was praying for him.

“Lord, go to him now,” I entreated; “tell him you have not forsaken him and us.

“Though the times are dark, Thou art still watching and waiting behind the cloud.

“And though Thou dost call Thy little ones home by strange paths, yet Thou doest it all in love.”

Through the wall, words such as these from that tempest-tossed soul reached me—

“Good Lord, deliver me! Make my faith triumphant in failure.”

No other audible words, but the sobs of grief grew less, then ceased. Faint murmurings still reached me. I knew the man was on his knees. I rose from mine, and lay down again.

This great and tried heart had got back to its sure refuge.

The long-looked-forward-to Christmas tree came

off, and was not wholly unsuccessful. But of our party, only John Grant was present, and I believe even he found it hard to be bright enough for the occasion.

Arthur promised to go round in the evening, but when the time came, he sent Mrs. Jones to see if his presence was actually required ; and finding from her report that things were going on smoothly, he proposed to me to come to evening service instead.

"Where shall we go ?" I asked.

"There is an old-fashioned little church west of Cornhill, where the music is good, and I know something of the preacher. We will go there."

Christmas night is not perhaps popular for church services. At any rate, this little city building was half empty. A verger motioned us to a seat. The choir were singing, not the accustomed Christmas hymns, but Faber's "O Paradise."

Arthur took up the verse, as it rang through the little church—

"I long to sin no more,
I long to be as pure on earth
As on thy sinless shore."

As his deep voice rose above its fellows, a lady in fresh widow's mourning, who sat in the seat be-

fore us, turned full round and looked at him. She had a pale, fair face ; not a beautiful face, but one capable of instantly arresting and claiming the attention.

Her hair, in striking contrast to her white skin, was very dark ; and, in still greater contrast to her youthful appearance, had several silver threads gleaming through its ebony.

She looked at Arthur with two startled and sorrowful eyes. Her open Hymn-book fell from her hands.

For half an instant my brother's voice was unsteady, but when the choir came to the last verse, his

"O Jesus, King of Paradise,"

fell on my ear with more power and sweetness than ever.

At the sound the lady started. A burning blush rose to her face, her brown eyes filled with tears, and she turned slowly away.

I looked at Arthur.

Whatever agitation or surprise he had shown had now wholly disappeared. With the full fervour of a heart at one with God he joined in the prayers.

At last prayers, singing, sermon came to an end, and the congregation began to stream out; but the young widow remained motionless. Her thick crape veil was down, but I felt that she was crying.

I touched my brother.

"You know her, Arthur? Speak to her."

He went up to her at once.

"Rosalie, are you well?"

"Yes, I am well, but my husband died a month ago."

"Have you children?"

"Two boys."

"They will help to comfort you."

"Oh! no, no."

"And God will do the rest."

She turned round suddenly, and threw up her veil.

"Have *you* forgiven me?"

Arthur did not speak for a moment.

"Yes," he said then slowly, "yes, you have my full and entire forgiveness."

I moved away into the church porch, where almost directly my brother joined me.

We walked home in silence. We had tea almost in silence, but when it was over I went up to

Arthur, and putting my arms round his neck, broke the ice.

"Who is she, brother?"

"Her name was Rosalie Manners. I was engaged to marry her."

"That was when father died?" I said.

"Yes, we were engaged then."

"And you could not marry because of us—because you gave the money to us?"

"Why do you say that?"

I had been keeping in my emotion all day; now, suddenly, I lost my self-control.

"I say it because I know it," I sobbed. "I knew always there was something. Oh! dear Arthur, dear, dear brother, it goes very hard to feel that we have ruined your life."

"Nay, my darling, you have not done so. No one has ruined my life."

"Only for us you would have married, and been happy."

"I might have married, but seeing you all want, I certainly should not have been happy."

"Arthur, may I hear the story?"

"Yes, I mean to tell it you, though there is not much to tell. I had an introduction to Rosalie's

father when first I came to London; he is one of the directors of St. Benedict's Hospital, and it was almost wholly owing to his influence I was appointed to it. I loved her at once, and I believed she cared for me.

"We were engaged with the full consent and approval of her family, and were to be shortly married.

"Then, Dorothy, you know our father died, and your mother and eight children were left in almost poverty. My duty was clear as daylight. I saw Rosalie, and told her what I had done—I offered to release her, but asked her to have patience for a year or two. My position was already good, and I hoped eventually to have plenty of practice. She was disappointed, but agreed to wait, and promised to be true to me in word and deed.

"I believe we might have been married, but for the rock on which her father and I soon split, Out-patient Reform. A year had nearly expired, and apparently all promised fair, for I was doing well — when" — Arthur paused.

"Well, brother?"

“Dorothy, I was at that time in a state of mental agony—my love, my hopes, my every earthly prospect pulled me one way, and yet God and duty pointed unflinchingly to the other.

“One day, after some peculiarly glaring cases of neglect, in the out-patient department, had come under my immediate notice, I felt I could bear it no longer, and went to Mr. Manners with a proposition to the effect, that I would only undertake to prescribe for a certain number of out-patients within a given time, which I meant to lay before the hospital board at the next meeting.

“‘Do so,’ said the old gentleman, ‘and you will be dismissed, or at least compelled to resign.’

“‘But you have great influence, and will support me?’

“‘I shall not support you, and what is more, your engagement with my daughter ceases with your hospital connection. She shall never marry a ruined man.’

“‘I can earn enough to support her!’

“‘Your position will be gone, sir—no, if you

persevere in this folly, you know the consequence.'

"I gave myself a night to think of it, and in the morning wrote to Rosalie. I told her everything, what I must do, and its consequence.

"But I made of her one request.

"I begged of her, by the love I bore her, which was never greater than then, when I was about to lose her, to grant me a farewell interview. I don't know now why I asked for it, or what I hoped for from it. Perhaps I had a vain longing that she would yet wait for me, and eventually be mine.

"At any rate I made the request."

"It was a very reasonable request, brother."

"It was a request that Rosalie, in her short, cold reply refused to grant, and our engagement was at an end."

"Well, Arthur?"

"That is all. In a month's time she married another. I heard she was happy—he was rich and in a better position."

"Was that when I came to you?"

"Yes, just then. For a time I felt bitter, but it was the agony of tearing the ideal Rosalie from my heart."

He covered his face for an instant, then started up with a look of pain.

"There, dear, don't ask me any more. I have forgiven her long since—long since."

"Arthur, all through your life, has God been with you?"

"I am not grieving for the boy, Dorothy. Less for him than for any one. His trials and battles are ended—beyond my highest hopes is he satisfied. Nor am I down in any way now, though I confess I have gone through a hard struggle."

"Was it this morning?"

"It came to a climax then."

"May I ask about it?"

"You may, though it is difficult to tell you all—you know that paper?"

"The paper you read yesterday for the — Society!"

"The paper I was to have read. Dorothy, I was not allowed to read it."

"How was that? I thought they must grant you a hearing."

"They did not. When I began to read, and the subject was introduced, I was positively *forced* to desist. The theme was most unpopular and unsuitable. I suppose I had hoped too much from my own collected facts and words—it seemed the last thing I could do—the last thing left to me to do, and it failed."

"Arthur, some day people's eyes must be opened to this great abuse."

"Some day they will, and meanwhile I would still say to my soul, 'Wait thou the Lord's leisure.'"

"He is helping you to do that."

"He is helping me to be patient, to have faith even in failure."

"Do you remember Dr. Vaughan's sermon,
'Faith Triumphant in Failure?'"

"Yes! He speaks of failure as a blessing—or rather of faith in failure, as the highest type of faith—he is right."

After this we were silent for over an hour. Not until I moved to go away did Arthur speak.

“Are you leaving me?”

“Not if you want me to stay.”

“I have something to give you.”

He rose from his seat, and unlocking a private drawer, returned with a sealed packet which he placed in my hand.

“Here is a Christmas present for you.”

I opened it eagerly. It contained a cheque—a cheque for no inconsiderable sum.

I looked up puzzled and astonished.

“To do what you like with, Dorothy.”

Then a light broke on me, I sprang to my feet.

“O Arthur! O Arthur! our father's manuscript!”

“I think this will publish it!”

“Indeed it will—but where did you get the money?”

“I saved it; I had not enough until now.”

"But can you give it?"

"Yes, you shall publish the book, it will abundantly repay its costs. I look forward to it as being a great source of income to you primarily, to the others secondarily. Of course, it must first be revised, but I have already spoken to Watson, he reads at the British Museum, and I believe he will undertake that part of the work. If I can I will take him the manuscript—if not, you must."

"Arthur, why do you say, if you can?"

"Because— Dear, I should like to tell you something."

The new crisp cheque fell from my hands, and lay unheeded on the floor.

"Something," continued Arthur, "that I find I *must* tell you, but which will go hard with you to hear."

"Is it a trouble?"

"Ay, it may be to us both, in any case to you!"

"Then, dear Arthur, wait one moment!"

I pressed my face on my hands, I tried to still my beating pulses with the thought of God. God gave me strength; I looked up.

"Now, brother, go on. If it cuts like a knife I will bear it."

Arthur had been watching me, his face was deadly pale. The moment I looked at him, all fear for myself was lost in anxiety on his account. And curiously at that moment two memories flashed before me. The day Mr. Grant would not look at me; the day he had told me not to agitate Arthur. A glimmering of the truth stole into my mind; nay more, so sure did I feel of it, that I began the subject.

"Are you going to speak to me of the day you were ill?"

"Yes."

"Arthur, what? what ailed you?"

"You would best understand it by these words, spasm of the heart."

"Ah!" then with a start, "was it not of that our father died?"

"He had disease of the heart of long standing. I am not similarly affected."

"Then it is not dangerous with you!"

"I do not say that."

"Well, Arthur, go on," for he had paused again.

"The paroxysm you saw me in, Dorothy, was not the first I had suffered from, but it was the longest and most severe. Then I first took Grant

into my confidence. He and I agreed as to the cause."

"What was the cause?"

"*Angina pectoris*, in other words, spasm of the heart."

"Dangerous?" I whispered.

"It is generally fatal to life."

I was silent.

"I had no bad attack since," continued Arthur, "until yesterday. Then, I suppose, I was hurt or disappointed, but as I was leaving the meeting of the —— Society, the most severe agony I ever experienced came on. When it passed, I went off at once to Sir George Jones."

"Who is he?"

"The first opinion in London on such diseases."

"What did he say?"

"He thinks it possible—just possible—that the anguish I suffered may be caused by a neuralgic affection which greatly resembles *Angina pectoris*. In that case, if I follow out his directions, I may be cured."

"What are they?"

"He will put me under a particular treatment. But the indispensable thing is hard."

"What is that?"

"I must give up all work, for at least two years. I must leave London and go on a long sea voyage. He wants me to visit Australia."

"Well?"

"He thinks it possible—just possible, mind—that at the end of that time I may return home cured."

"O Arthur!" looking up with sudden relief, "you will go?"

"It is my duty to try it—but"—

"Yes, brother."

"It is only right to tell you that I don't agree with Sir George."

"Why, Arthur?"

"There is one symptom which accompanies *Angina pectoris*—and that alone."

"What is it?"

"The inexpressible sense of dying."

"Do you feel that?" I asked after a pause.

"Yes, very strongly. But," he added, smiling and speaking cheerfully, "Sir George may be right, only somehow I don't think so."

"Brother, if—if it should be what you fear, must you die soon?"

"I may live for years, and die in the end of something else. That is what the great man says, but not what I think."

"What do you think?"

"I think—I am glad to think—that I shall go soon. Dorothy," raising his head and looking afar with bright eyes, "this morning I saw a vision."

"What was it?"

"I saw the Holy City."

I said nothing.

"Yes," continued Arthur, "I suppose it was *only* a vision, though it seemed more. I was lying down, perhaps I was asleep. I saw it anyhow."

"What was it like?"

"I cannot tell you—I have no words; you must wait."

"How long?"

"Until you too see it."

"The preacher to-night spoke of heaven. Did he give a right idea of it?"

"He tried to, but failed. There are no words to describe that better land."

"O Arthur!" and a cry of mingled joy and pain escaped me.

"When you get there, you will see our father."

"We shall see Christ, my beloved—and He is all and in all."

I rose from my seat. I was trembling, very, exceedingly. Arthur put his arm round me.

"Will you carry on my work in this place?"

"How can I stay when you are gone?"

"The way will be made plain to you." He pressed his lips on my forehead, he looked into my eyes.

The flood-gates of inexpressible anguish were broken up, and, afraid to trust myself another moment in his presence, I rushed away.





CHAPTER XXIX.

I SAW THE HOLY CITY.

"For death and life, with ceaseless strife,
Beat wild on this world's shore ;
And all our calm is in that balm,
Not lost, but gone before."

MRS. NORTON.

 THAT night was bitterly cold. I put a match to the fire laid in my grate, and sat over it, hardly thinking. After the first burst of tears were past, hardly suffering—realising not at all. And yet I went over in a dull, kind of stupid way in my mind, every word of Arthur's conversation with me. I knew, indeed it seemed as if I had known for ages, that he carried about with him a fatal disease, a disease which any moment might cause sudden death. Nay more, I *knew* that he would die soon.

I stirred the fire into a brighter blaze and sat there very quiet and dull.

The clock struck eleven, then twelve, still I never moved.

At last, about one o'clock, I heard my brother come up and go to bed, then I also lay down, but without undressing, I felt too stupid even for that.

I was dropping asleep, still with that knowledge, so old and yet so new, pressing on me, when a sound in the street caused me to start and sit up.

In an instant I had shaken off my lethargy, and was intensely awake and watchful.

The sound was nothing more than a footstep.

Thousands of feet passed on all day and mostly all night, but these were the quiet hours, and this footstep stopped as I knew it would at our door.

In a moment, in half a moment, the night-bell would be rung, and Arthur would be disturbed; quick as thought my resolve was taken. I rose and gently opening my door, ran down-stairs.

"Don't ring, but tell me what you want," I called through the key-hole.

"The doctor, please," answered a child's voice.

Then I opened the door, and a little girl of about ten years stood before me.

"Please, mother's werry bad, can the doctor come?"

I knew the child—she was an inhabitant of Angel Court. I also knew her mother, and something of what ailed her, and believed it to be a case I could undertake.

I thought a moment, then drew the little girl in and shut the door.

"Sit down on this chair," I said, "I shall be with you in a moment."

I went back to my room, taking precautions to make no noise. I put on my cloak and hat, and going to the store-room, filled a basket with bread, tea, sugar, then returned to the child.

"What ails your mother?"

"She 'ave fainted twice; she be werry bad."

"Have you any fire?"

"No."

"Nor food?"

"We 'ad supper, but mother said she worn't 'angry."

"If I put some coals in a bag, could you carry them?"

"Eh!" with a delighted grin on her sharp little face, "I b'lieve yer."

"I have some food in this basket. You and I will see what a good warm, and something to eat all round, will do before we get the doctor."

We set off together, and I found that my bold venture turned out successful. The poor woman was very ill—almost dying—but it was illness brought on by starvation, and food was the remedy.

I found, however, that it was necessary for me to spend the night in Angel Court. The baby was also ill—the little ones had all to be fed, the fire replenished, the poor mother soothed and encouraged.

The grey dawn was again breaking in the east when I walked home. I was thoroughly, completely weary now, but my lagging footsteps were in no hurry to convey me to any place of rest. The stupid feeling of last night had for the time departed. I was intensely, keenly awake to what was about to happen. Perhaps it had happened already.

As I drew near the house I felt afraid to enter.

As I stood on the doorstep and rang the bell, I trembled from head to foot.

Mrs. Jones answered my summons.

Her face was unconcerned, and all her astonishment and consternation were for me.

"Yes—Mr. Shirley was out—he had gone an hour ago, but where had I been? how bad! how dreadful I looked!"

I suffered the good woman to take me into the kitchen, the only room as yet with a fire, and drank the hot tea she prepared. But when she proposed to me to go to bed, I shrank from it.

"No," I said, "it is not worth while." And then I began to question her about Arthur.

"Had he left any message?"

"No—why should he? He had just gone to see a patient."

"How long was he away?"

"About an hour—he might be back any moment."

Hearing Mrs. Jones say this, in some strange way comforted me. I cheered up a little and allowed her to talk to me.

Finding I would not obey her and take some rest, she began to unfold to me her plans. She

wished to adopt little Sissy. She would bear all the child's expenses, but would not leave us on her account. Might she bring Sissy to the house?

I said perhaps it might be managed—knowing all the time that the household would be broken up—the little home, so small, so happy in its perfect love and sympathy, scattered. Perhaps John Grant, or Miss Jane, might keep Mrs. Jones, and Sissy might live with them.

The old feeling of intense stupidness was returning to me; good Mrs. Jones rambled on; I listened dreamily, until at last the fire, the warm tea, the monotonous conversation, lulled me to slumber. . . .

I awoke with Arthur's name on my lips. A tall figure stood on the hearth, not my brother.

"Is it you, John?" I said half dreamily, God help me, half playfully, for in my sleep I had forgotten my fears. Mr. Grant did not at once answer me. I started upright and looked at him. I started to my feet, and looked at him more intently.

"Well," I said.

"I have bad news for you."

"I know it."

"Arthur is"—

"Dead!" I said.

"No, not that. Are you prepared for something?"

"Yes. He told me last night."

"Ah! I begged him to, though he took it hard, poor fellow! A fresh attack came on as he was walking past St. Benedict's this morning; he is there."

I tumbled in a confused kind of way for my rumpled jacket. Mr. Grant put it on for me, and placed my hat on my head.

"Now I am ready," I said, and I tried to get past him and Mrs. Jones to the door.

I did not want either of them. I would go to St. Benedict's to see my brother, and the only desire I had at that moment in my crushed heart was to see him alone.

A cab was waiting at the door; I jumped in, but when Mr. Grant seated himself beside me, I made no audible objection. I buried my face in one hand, and my companion took the other and tried to rub some warmth into it.

When we drew up at the gates of St. Benedict's, I asked him a question.

"Have you seen Arthur?"

"Yes."

"Was he better when you left?"

"Not in such agony, but"—

"Well?"

"Dear Dorothy, he is dying."

I repeated the words vaguely.

Oh! how stupid I felt.

Once again I entered the wide hall and went up the stairs, this time bending my steps not to one of the wards, but to a private room. A nurse was coming out of this room. When she saw us she closed the door carefully, put her finger to her lips, and shaking her head went up to Mr. Grant.

I pushed past them both and entered the room.

I knew they were following me, I knew all that the nurse's look signified.

I knew, even before they told me, that as noble a heart as ever beat in human breast was still.

I went up to the bed and looked quietly on the grand face, on which was surely set not the seal of failure, but of victory.

Why was I so sorry for this?

While I was in such agony, the angels were smiling, Christ was rejoicing, God was well-pleased.

A soul had passed through the travail of its birth and entered into Life.

By a curious coincidence, he had gone home from the very hospital from which he had been dismissed, from within easy reach of those outpatients, the treatment of whom had so sorely tried his heart. I knelt down and took his hand, not yet quite cold, in mine.

O God ! to clasp those fingers close,
And yet to feel so lonely !
To see a light upon such brows,
Which is the day-light only !
Be pitiful, O God !





CHAPTER XXX.

WHAT JOHN SAID TO ME.

"God, God !
With a child's voice I cry,
Weak, and confidingly,
God, God ! "

MRS. BROWNING.

 WILL not speak of my grief. I can at best only sum it up in these words, My brother was dead !

My best friend ! my truest guide ! my dearest on earth ! was dead.

Could any greater blow descend upon me. So I said in the stupor which followed those first days, in the keen agony which came next, in the silent, dull grief which accompanied the longer interval. But then at last a softer, gentler feeling which sorrowed for me, which rejoiced for him, came like dew upon my soul.

I had come back to Dulwich, not to the old house, but to the small cottage which my mother now rented.

Ruth had come for me and taken me home, and here for six months I fought with, and was conquered by, and sometimes conquered my grief.

But as I said, I will not speak of this, why should I?

Enough that I do not think it was sent in vain to me,—that I learned, I think, the lesson I was meant to learn by it.

Also, that Christ was with me in this storm, which, as those can tell who know what He is in the dark and cloudy day, makes all the difference.

At the end of six months, I raised my head once more and began to live.

I looked my position fairly in the face. Truly, it was gloomy enough, for I had to earn my livelihood, I could not stay at home.

My mother's income, small as it was, had been lessened by Arthur's death.

Impossible for me to be a burden on her.

Again the old vexed question of what I should do returned to me.

I had not the education requisite for a teacher; 'even if I had, my past life had unfitted me for it.'

I must go as a companion, but where should I find a second Miss Grant? And through all my puzzled thoughts, as the refrain and end of everything, came Arthur's last words—

"You will take up my work when I am gone."

*But this I felt must be my dream for the future; sometime when I was old I might have money enough to go back to the East End and do a little good among the people.

Impossible now!

One day I went into the drawing-room, where my mother, Aunt Hannah, and Ruth were sitting.

My entrance was an object of interest to the three ladies, even Aunt Hannah smiled at me, and my dear mother made room for me by her side.

"Is my darling beginning to cheer up a little?"

"I am quite happy, mother."

Ruth's peaceful face was stirred at these words; she came and seated herself on a foot-stool at my feet.

"Mother," I said, "I think I shall go to London to-morrow."

"Oh! my love, I hope you won't find it too much for you."

"I shall feel it, dear mother, but I ought to go. I must say good-bye to Miss Grant, and old Joseph, and Mrs. Jones, and"—my voice trembled. Then cheering up—"on my return I shall put an advertisement into the *Times*."

"What for?" exclaimed Aunt Hannah's sharp voice.

"As soon as I can I must get something to do, and I was so lucky before as a companion, I think I shall try my fortune again."

"But we *can* manage with you at home, dear," said my mother.

"O Dolly! don't leave us," said Ruth, laying her head caressingly on my knee.

"For my part," exclaimed Aunt Hannah, "since Dorothy has become such a good accountant, I'd rather do without meat twice a week than miss her from the house."

A tribute of esteem coming from this quarter was so rare and unexpected, that I jumped up and kissed the old lady.

While doing this, the door was opened and John Grant came in.

“See!” said Aunt Hannah, catching my hand and facing me round, “this child wants to earn her living.”

“What for?” asked Mr. Grant.

“If she must leave home, sir, had she not better return to Miss Jane? who seems so fond of her.”

“Yes, Dorothy, that would be best,” said John very gravely. Then he turned away.

I felt vexed with Aunt Hannah—vexed with him, for of all impossible things this was most impossible.

My task next day was a sore one, almost beyond my strength.

The more affectionate my poor people were, the more it broke my heart to leave them. By the time I reached Miss Jane’s room, all my fortitude had given way.

“She is but a child, John,” said the old lady, addressing her cousin. “This is too much for her—you had better say your say and have it over. “Doll, dear,” touching me, “he does not want you to go.”

"But I must go," I said, sobbing and shaking my head.

"I have a word to say to you," said Mr. Grant.

Something in his tone caused me to look at him—something in his tone roused an unacknowledged hope in my heart.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Come down first to Arthur's study."

"Oh! not there," I said, shrinking back in pain.

"Yes," answered John, holding out his hand. "I can tell it you best there."

Without a word I followed him into the little familiar room—then he shut the door and came up to my side.

"Are you crying for Arthur, or for yourself, or for both?"

"I am not crying for dear Arthur—I am selfishly breaking my heart at leaving this place."

"But you need not leave it."

"Yes, I must. Even if I had money enough, I could not remain."

"Why?"

I made no answer.

"Did not Arthur ask you to stay here, and follow his work?"

• "O Mr. Grant! you are cruel to me, when you *know* it is impossible."

"It is not impossible."

Then after a pause, in which I had said nothing,
"Did not Arthur tell you the way would be
made plain?"

"Yes."

• "He knew what I am about to say—shall I say
it?"

"Yes."

"If I take your little hand," pressing it between
his strong fingers. "If I give you of my love
and ask for yours? If I take you to my heart?
If I say I cannot do without you, will you stay?"

I cannot record my answer—I can only add
that this was *not* my farewell visit to the East
End.





CHAPTER XXXI

NOW.

“There’s a light about to break,
There’s a day about to dawn :
Men of thought, and men of action !
Clear the way !”



AM John Grant’s wife !

I have been his happy wife now for
more than five years.

And in saying this, and saying also that I am
happy, I bring my story to an end.

Not, however, without a few farewell words ;
farewell words to the dead and to the living.

Arthur is dead, so they say, though I never
think of him but as one who has entered into
fuller life. He has passed from earth, and his
works do follow him.

What he regarded as a failure, was but the seed-
time of a goodly harvest.

For Angel Court in these years has undergone a radical change. The wretched entrance is gone, the light of day is let into the rooms—the houses are many of them rebuilt, all drained, purified, rendered habitable. The underground cellars are shut up, and fever, rooted out of its den, has retired to more congenial lurking places.

In proportion have the inhabitants of Angel Court improved.

They pay their rent regularly, keep their rooms clean, and send their children to school.

Many of them subscribe to clothing-clubs, a few even to book-clubs, and I believe all, without a single exception, pay in their threepence weekly to the Provident Dispensary, first set on foot by their beloved Dr. Shirley.

Thus they secure for themselves and their children attendance and medicine in times of sickness, and find the result infinitely more satisfactory than the weary waiting, the hasty glance, and often useless prescription which awaits them as out-patients at our large hospitals.

But, though on this question the agitation for reform begun during my brother's life has, within the medical profession, gone on and deepened,

until it has been taken up and discussed by its cleverest and most thoughtful members, still the out-patient departments are more resorted to than ever. The poor still go away unrelieved ; the rich and well-to-do still crowd them out ; and last but not least, the in-patients, for whom the hospitals are really meant, and were originally built, are often dismissed when little more than half-cured, because the funds which should be forthcoming for their complete recovery are expended on this sham of out-patient relief.

It has been said that this one great system of indiscriminate charity has helped, more than anything else, to pauperise the nation.

Yes, the evil still exists, but we look for better things, and feel that the reform so surely needed cannot be very distant.

"In our patience possess we our souls," doing in the meanwhile, on a very small scale, what we can to mitigate this public error.

Meanwhile, Miss Grant lives and is happy. She has taken up her final abode in our house, where doubtless, when her time comes, she will die, and God helping me, lay her head on her dear Doll's bosom as she closes her eyes in her last long sleep.

On my wedding-day she added one hundred pounds to the donation Arthur had already given me, for the publishing of our father's valuable book. It was carefully revised, and came out last spring, and has already paid back its expenses.

Mrs. Jones rents the best house in Angel Court, and reserving two rooms for herself, lets out the others, by which she obtains a comfortable livelihood.

Old Joseph is one of her lodgers, and, delightful to relate, the old man has lost his rheumatism, and is no longer wholly confined to bed ; and Sissy, Mrs. Jones' adopted daughter, waits on him, and is loved by him as his own child.

Seeing these changes for good, hoping for yet brighter days, John and I often declare ourselves the happiest couple in London.

We are not rich, we work hard, but God has given us of His blessing and of His peace, and we can truly say that mercy and love follow us abundantly.

We rejoice in the living, and tender and calm are our feelings for the dead.

Over my nursery mantelpiece hangs a faded

print. It is the copy of Kehren's "Good Shepherd," which once hung in Captain Jack's attic.

Often in the summer evenings I sit under this picture, and tell my one child the story of our lost lamb carried so safely home.

I have called my boy Arthur, and earnestly do his father and I pray that he may tread in those "footprints" which Arthur left behind him "on the sands of time."

After the rain comes the clear shining of the sun.

We on earth, and we in heaven, are well.

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